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GERMANY

A. W. WARD
AND
S. WILKINSON

VOLUME II

1852 - 1871

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Cambridge Historical Series
EDITED BY G. W. PROTHERO, F.B.A., LITT.D.
HON. LL.D. OF EDINBURGH AND HARVARD, AND HONORARY FELLOW OF KING'S COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE

GERMANY
1815–1890

Volume II 1852–1871

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS
C. F. CLAY, MANAGER

LONDON
FETTER LANE, E.C. 4

EDINBURGH
100 PRINCES STREET

NEW YORK: G. P. PUTNAM'S SONS
BOMBAY, CALCUTTA, MADRAS: MACMILLAN AND CO., LTD.
TORONTO: J. M. DENT AND SONS, LTD.
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GERMANY
1815–1890

BY

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Volume II 1852–1871

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at the University Press
1917

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GENERAL PREFACE

The aim of this series is to sketch the history of Modern Europe, with that of its chief colonies and conquests, from about the end of the fifteenth century down to the present time. In one or two cases the story commences at an earlier date: in the case of the colonies it generally begins later. The histories of the different countries are described, as a rule, separately; for it is believed that, except in epochs like that of the French Revolution and Napoleon I, the connection of events will thus be better understood and the continuity of historical development more clearly displayed.

The series is intended for the use of all persons anxious to understand the nature of existing political conditions. "The roots of the present lie deep in the past"; and the real significance of contemporary events cannot be grasped unless the historical causes which have led to them are known. The plan adopted makes it possible to treat the history of the last four centuries in considerable detail, and to embody the most important results of modern research. It is hoped therefore that the series will be useful not only to beginners but to students who have already acquired some general knowledge of European History. For those who wish to carry their studies further, the bibliography appended to each volume will act as a guide to original sources of information and works of a more special character.

Considerable attention is paid to political geography; and each volume is furnished with such maps and plans as may be requisite for the illustration of the text.

G. W. PROTHERO.

PREFACE

THE Syndics of the Press having, with the approval of the Editor of this Series, allowed me to modify and, in a measure, to extend the plan of this book, it will, if I live to complete it, consist of three volumes. The second of these, now published, comprises not quite two decades; but it covers the period in which the new German Empire was made—mainly by arms and the man. I have, therefore, as already announced in the preface to my first volume, for the preparation of its successor sought the assistance of my friend Professor Spenser Wilkinson. He is the writer of chapter II, pp. 149–170 and 179–183, of chapter IV, to p. 298, and of chapter VII, part I, in the present volume. He is, likewise, responsible for the maps which illustrate his text, as well as for the brief war bibliographies (C); while he has, also, given me the benefit of his advice in other parts of this *History*.

My account of the later developments of the Schleswig-Holstein question is largely based on the papers of my father, the late Mr John Ward, C.B., who was accredited to the Hanse Towns from 1860 to 1870, and who had exceptional opportunities for watching the progress of the transactions in question. My other authorities are mentioned in the foot-notes and in the bibliography. Readers

of Sybel's great work, *Die Gründung des Deutschen Reiches*, are aware that its last two volumes (VI and VII) were not, like their predecessors, based upon a study of the archives of the Foreign Office at Berlin.

Vol. III of this work I propose, as announced, to carry on, though no longer in annalistic fashion, to the fall of Bismarck. while indicating, in a concluding chapter, some of the currents of policy and action noticeable in the subsequent period of German history. For this volume I also reserve some notice of the literary and social phenomena of the beginnings of the new empire, together with a brief bibliography of works on ecclesiastical history, and of others, illustrating the chief literary and artistic currents, and the educational, economical and social life, of Germany during the latter half of the nineteenth century.

I have again to thank my friend the Editor of this Series for the attention and care with which, in the midst of many pressing and important engagements, he has, greatly to their advantage, revised the proofs of this volume.

A. W. W.

PETERHOUSE,
March, 1917.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER I

AUSTRIA, PRUSSIA AND THE GERMANIC CONFEDERATION, 1852–1863

The revived Confederation after Olmütz—The processes of Reaction in Austria, Hesse-Cassel and Hanover—Commercial Treaty between Austria and Prussia, and renewal of the *Zollverein*—The German Great Powers and Russia—The Bethmann-Hollweg Party—Alliance between Austria and Prussia—The Bambergers—Prussia holds back from the Alliance between Austria and the Western Powers—The Paris Peace Congress—The *coup de main* of the Neufchâtel Loyalists, and its sequel—The decline of Frederick William IV—The Regency of William Prince of Prussia—His administrative changes: the end of Manteuffel's Ministry—The 'New Era'—The Italian War and Prussia—The Peace of Villafranca—The *National-verein*: Rudolf von Bennigsen—Its operations and its difficulties—The Würzburgers—German fears of France—The Baden meeting and the German Governments—Roon's scheme of Army Reorganisation—The Reorganisation Bills, and the 'Conflict'—Its effect on German Politics—End of Bach's Ascendancy in Austria—Rechberg and Schmerling—Liberalism prevails in Baden: Roggenbach—The *Grossdeutschen* and the *Fürstentag* Design—The constitutional troubles at Berlin and at Cassel—Prussian Commercial Treaty with France—Bismarck Minister: his antecedents and first Ministerial experiences—Insurrection in Russian Poland—Russia, Prussia and Austria—The *Fürstentag* scheme started: Prussian refusal to attend—The Congress and its failure . . . . Page 1

CHAPTER II

The Schleswig-Holstein Question and the Danish War, 1864

The political situation in Germany towards the close of 1863—*Rapprochement* between Austria and Prussia: the Schleswig-Holstein question—Retrospective summary: the Succession and the Nationalities—The 'Open Letter' of Christian VIII—The constitutional conflict of 1848—The War of 1848–50—The Proclamation of January 28th, and the London Protocol of May 8th, 1852—The Augustenburg Compensation—The new Constitutions—Popular grievances in the Duchies—Action of the Frankfort Diet—Austrian protest—Lord Russell's Proposals—The Danish Patent of March 30th, 1863—Federal Execution approved—Death of Frederick VII and Augustenburg manifesto—German support of Augustenburg—The Diet, Austria and Prussia—Federal Execution decreed—Attitude of Great Britain, France and Russia—The Federal troops and the Duke of Augustenburg in Holstein—The two Great Powers and the Diet—Austro-Prussian *ultimatum* to Denmark and invasion of Schleswig—Bismarck, Roon and Moltke—Moltke's training—His analysis of a war against Denmark—The Danish army—Advance of the Allied army into Schleswig—Evacuation of the Dannevirke—Würzburg Conference of February 18th—Death of Maximilian II of Bavaria—Effects of the Danish retreat—Invasion of Jutland—Storming of Düppel—The London Conference—The German Powers declare the Treaty of 1852 at an end—British proposal of the partition of Schleswig—Breakdown of the Conference—End of the Armistice—Landing in Alsen and occupation of Jutland—The Rendsburg brawl—Peace negotiations at Vienna—Fall of Rechberg—The Peace of Vienna 99

CHAPTER III

The Rupture between Austria and Prussia

New Phase of the Schleswig-Holstein question—Biegeleben's and Bismarck's Dispatches—The Prussian demands of February 22nd, 1865—Resistance of Austria and the Diet—Augustenburg or annexation?—Austrian Ministerial changes: the Belcredi

Ministry—The expulsion of the Duke of Augustenburg demanded—The Prussian Crown—Syndicate on the Succession—The Gastein negotiations—Convention of Gastein—The Biarritz interviews—Proposed peaceable cession of Venetia—Further friction in Holstein—Ministerial Council of February 28th, 1866, at Berlin—Prusso-Italian Treaty of Alliance—German National Assembly proposed by Bismarck—Austrian Mobilisation—Negotiations with Hesse-Cassel and Hanover—Mobilisation of the south-western states—Bismarck's position—Policy of Napoleon III—Scheme of Anton von Gablenz—Proposed European Congress—Napoleon's Letter of June 15th—Austrian and Prussian statements to the Diet—Austrian evacuation of Holstein—Austrian Motion for Federal Mobilisation—Outbreak of the War 190

CHAPTER IV

The Austro-Prussian War

1866. King William I and the Prussian army—Moltke's studies of a war against Austria—He is hampered by the King's hesitation—Prussian army moved to the frontier—Its positions on June 18th—The Austrian army—Its preparations for war—Benedek—Krismanič—Austrian army in Moravia—Lack of cooperation between Austria and her Allies—Prussia's *ultimatum* at Dresden, Hanover and Cassel—The Hanoverian army—Invasion of Hanover and Hesse—Hanoverian army retreats to Göttingen—Battle of Langensalza—King George capitulates—Campaign against Austria—Prince Frederick Charles—The Crown-prince of Prussia—Moltke keeps to his own plan and orders both armies to advance towards Gitschin—Position of Prussian armies on June 25th and 26th—Benedek at Olmütz—Urged by Emperor to advance, he adopts the scheme of Krismanič for a march to Königinhof and abides by it—Reaches Josefstadt—Critical position—Disagreement between Benedek and Krismanič—Half-measures—Austrian victory at Trautenau—Prussian victory at Nachod—Benedek's hesitation—Prussian victories at Skalitz and Burkersdorf—Benedek throws over Krismanič and orders the Crown-prince of Saxony to fall back—Action at Königinhof—The Crown-prince of Saxony and Count Clam-Gallas on the Iser—Action at Podol—Prussians at

Turnau—Crown-prince of Saxony retires to Gitschin—His rear-guard attacked at Munchengrätz—Prince Frederick Charles requires urging on—Battle of Gitschin—Disastrous retreat—Benedek falls back to Königgrätz—His despair—Determines to stand and fight—The battlefield of Königgrätz—The Prussian headquarters at Gitschin—Prince Frederick Charles resolves to attack—Moltke orders up the Second army—Battle of Königgrätz—Retreat to Olmütz—Archduke Charles orders the whole army to Vienna—Prussians intercept it at Tobitschau—Action near Pressburg—Armistice—Prussian campaign against South German States—Prince Charles of Bavaria—Prince Alexander of Hesse—Falckenstein interposes between them—Action at Dermbach—Prince Charles retreats—Prince Alexander retreats—Falckenstein defeats Prince Charles on the Saale, but marches on Frankfort—Defeats Prince Alexander at Lauffach and Aschaffenburg—Occupies Frankfort—Is superseded by Manteuffel—Prince Alexander marches to the Tauber—Manteuffel defeats him at Werbach, at Tauberbischofsheim and Gerchsheim—Defeats Prince Charles at Hettstadt and Rossbrünn—Battle of Hettstadt—Bombardment of Würzburg—Armistice—Causes of success and failure—Campaign of Custoza—Battle of Lissa—Moral effect of Königgrätz—Austrian cession of Venetia to Napoleon—French offer of mediation between Prussia and Austria—Bismarck's proposals—Basis of Preliminaries arranged by Napoleon and von der Goltz—Negotiations with Austria—Proposals made through Giskra at Vienna—The Prussian demands—Armistice—Negotiations at Nikolsburg—Preliminaries of Nikolsburg—Prusso-French treaty proposed through Benedetti rejected—Manteuffel in Petersburg—Prussian Treaties of Peace with the south-western states—Austro-Italian Treaty of Peace—The Prussian achievement . . . 241

CHAPTER V

The North-German Confederation

The Federal Constitution: Preliminary discussions—Opening of the Prussian Diet—The Indemnity question—Address of the Chamber of Deputies to the King—The Indemnity Bill passed—Negotiations with the small states allied with Prussia—The Annexation Bill passed—The Prussian Constitution

extended to the entire monarchy—The first *Reichstag* of the North-German Confederation, elected by universal suffrage, to be constituent only—Financial and military arrangements in Prussia—Settlement with Saxony—Relations with Austria: Beust appointed Austrian Minister of Foreign Affairs and Chancellor—The states of the south-west; Bavaria—Fluctuations of Bavarian opinion—King Lewis II and Richard Wagner—Württemberg and the Prussian alliance—National feeling in Baden—The Prussian Diet and the War Dotations—The annexed lands—Anti-Prussian agitation in Hanover—Division of opinion—Bennigsen and the National-Liberals—Administrative reorganisation and Provincial Grant—The Guelfic Legion—Meeting of the North-German *Reichstag*—Debates on the Federal Constitution—The Constitution as finally settled: limits; legislation; presidency; *Bundesrat* and Federal Chancellor; *Reichstag*; military system; finance; relations with the south-western states—Conferences on military matters and on renewal of the *Zollverein*—The *Zollverein* Treaties approved by Bavaria, Württemberg and Baden—Baden's application for immediate entry into the North-German Confederation declined—Elections for the *Zollparlament*—Financial and social legislation of the *Reichstag*—Von der Heydt succeeded by O. Camphausen—Close of the *Zollparlament*—Hohenlohe and the Oecumenical Council . 324

CHAPTER VI

FRANCO-GERMAN RELATIONS, 1866–1870

France and the Peace of Prague—Change in the policy of Napoleon III: the Circular of September 16th, 1866—Benedetti's Memorandum after conversation with Bismarck on Luxemburg and Belgium—The Luxemburg question—Antecedents of the French project as to Belgium—German policy as to Luxemburg—Attitude of the Dutch Government—Question of the Prussian Garrison—Period of suspense ended by Napoleon III—Bismarck's explanation to the *Reichstag*—Germany accepts a Conference—Bismarck's action in the Luxemburg affair reviewed—King William and Bismarck at Paris—The French and Austrian Emperors at Salzburg—Austrian rights in Schleswig-Holstein transferred to Prussia—Failure of French

proposal of a Congress—Oecumenical Council summoned: Hohenlohe's Circular — Prince Charles of Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen and the Roumanian throne—The Triple Alliance project shelved again—The Belgian Railways dispute—The Disarmament scheme resumed and abandoned—Archduke Albrecht's Visit to Paris—Meeting of the Oecumenical Council —Gramont French Foreign Minister—Le Bœuf Minister of War—General Lebrun at Vienna—France without support—Final condition of Franco-German relations—The Hohenzollern candidature for the Spanish throne—Proposed candidature of Prince Leopold—Salazar at Weinburg—Bismarck, King William and the proposal—Bismarck's agents in Spain —King William at Ems—French protests—The French Government's declaration to the Chamber (July 6th)—Efforts to bring about withdrawal of Prince Leopold—Benedetti's mission to Ems—His first audience—Strat at Sigmaringen—Withdrawal of Prince Leopold by his Father—Further French demand—Benedetti's final meeting with the King (July 13th) —The 'Ems telegram' and its effect—French Ministerial Councils and Declaration (July 15th)—Mobilisation of North-German army (same date)—And of south-western armies—Declarations of War and Neutrality—Austrian and Italian Declarations—The Responsibility for the War . . 381

CHAPTER VII

The Franco-German War, 1870–1

I

1870. Expansion of the German army—Moltke's view of a war against France—The French army since 1815—Its reorganisation by Marshal Niel—The French plan—The Navies—Movement of the French army to the frontier—Napoleon III at Metz—Reconnaissance at Saarbrücken—Transport of the German army to the frontier—Its advance—Weissenburg, Wörth, Spicheren—Dismay at Paris—Palikao Minister of War —German right wheel — Borny — Mars-la-Tour — Gravelotte and St Privat—Moltke invests Metz and moves two armies towards Châlons—Napoleon and MacMahon at Châlons—Palikao insists on a junction with Bazaine—MacMahon moves

to Reims and starts thence for Montmédy—Hesitates but is urged on by Palikao—Moltke hears of MacMahon's movement and wheels to the right—Beaumont—Sedan—Surrender of Napoleon and of MacMahon's army—Revolution at Paris—Defences of the capital—Châtillon—German investment of Paris, where French Government remains—The *Francstireurs*—Ducrot's plan—Forces in the provinces—Fall of Strassburg—Werder disperses levies in the East—Levies at Orleans defeated at Artenay—Gambetta and the new armies—Freycinet—D'Aurelle de Paladines—Surrender of Bazaine—Sets free the German troops investing Metz—Le Bourget—Negotiations for an Armistice break down—Coulmiers—Prince Frederick Charles marches against D'Aurelle—Freycinet's interference—Beaune la Rolande—Loigny and Poupry—Orleans—Amiens—Champigny—Werder invests Belfort and defeats Garibaldi—Freycinet divides the army of the Loire—Chanzy's fine defence—His retreat to Le Mans—Bourbaki's retreat to Bourges—Freycinet plans a diversion against Werder—The Hallue—Le Bourget—Nuits—Prince Frederick Charles against Chanzy—Le Mans—Péronne—Bombardment of Paris—Bourbaki moves against Werder and Manteuffel against Bourbaki—Villersexel—Werder's retreat behind the Lisaine—Bourbaki's inaction—His advance to the Lisaine, attack on Werder and failure—His retreat to Besançon and attempted suicide—St Quentin—Mont Valérien—Armistice at Paris—Clinchant with Bourbaki's army retreats to Pontarlier—Is attacked by Manteuffel and withdraws into Switzerland—Fate of Belfort—Causes of success and failure 451

II

The Neutrality of the Great Powers—The 'League of Neutrals'—German national feeling: Cession of Alsace-Lorraine an essential condition of peace—Thiers at the chief neutral Courts—Breakdown of the peace negotiations at the front—Régnier—Russian Denunciation of the Black Sea Clause (1856) and new Peace Negotiations—Bismarck and Jules Favre—Armistice concluded—The Bordeaux National Assembly—Thiers and the negotiations at Versailles—Preliminaries of Peace signed—German troops enter Paris—Conferences at Brussels—Negotiations at Frankfort—Peace of Frankfort—

Cession of Alsace-Lorraine—The south-western states and the question of Union—The Bavarian demands—The Treaties with Württemberg and Bavaria—The Imperial Crown and Title—King Lewis's invitation to King William—Proclamation of the German Empire at Versailles—Problems of the future 535

BIBLIOGRAPHY TO VOL. II 562

INDEX 579

MAPS AND PLANS

1864 The theatre of war 152
Dannevirke, Düppel, Alsen 166

1866 The theatre of war 244
Campaign against Hanover 254
Campaign in Bohemia 260
The Battlefield of Königgrätz 278
Campaign in Southern Germany 290
Custoza 296

1870 Weissenburg to Gravelotte 462
Weissenburg and Wörth 466
Battles round Metz 474
Metz to Sedan 486
Beaumont and Sedan 490
Paris 502
The theatre of war 504
Orleans, Le Mans 508
Amiens, Bapaume, St Quentin 518
Eastern Campaign 526

MAP OF THE NORTH-GERMAN CONFEDERATION (1866) AND OF THE GERMAN EMPIRE (1871) . . . . . *at end*

CORRIGENDA

Vol. I

p. 115 l. 20 *for* 1914 *read* 1814.
p. 192 l. 10 from bottom (and Index) *for* Prince *read* Count.
p. 226 l. 8 from bottom *for* armada *read* force.
p. 511 (Index, Biegeleben) *for* J. M: *read* L. M.
p. 588 (Index) *read* Simon, Heinrich (Prussian politician), 435
Simson, Eduard von (Prussian politician), 487

CHAPTER I

AUSTRIA, PRUSSIA AND THE GERMANIC CONFEDERATION, 1852–1863

In the struggle for ascendancy between the two German Great Powers, on the ultimate issue of which, in the middle of the nineteenth century, everything had come to depend for the political future of Germany, the Punctation of Olmütz (November 29th, 1850) is justly regarded as marking the close of an epoch. Prussia renounced her Federal policy, embodied in the Union of German states under her leadership, in favour of the restoration of the Germanic Confederation, and she gave up the attempt to carry either the Schleswig-Holstein or the Hesse-Cassel question to an issue by force of arms. The only concession made to her in return was the holding of the Dresden Conferences for the revision of the constitution of the Confederation, which in point of fact deprived the Austrian design, to a certain extent, of its completeness. At the same time (May 1851), a secret treaty was concluded between the two Great Powers, which safeguarded their territories from any outside attack.

Within the revived Confederation everything now lay open to the processes of the Reaction. The palladium of national and Liberal aspirations, the *Reichsverfassung* of 1849, was abandoned, as it seemed, for ever; and in the several states constitutional life had either already been extinguished or was impotent to assert itself against

administrative control or oppression. In the Austrian empire, the abolition of the constitution, on March 4th, 1852, ushered in eight years of absolute government, identified above all with the name of Bach, and associated with the ascendancy of a Church free within the limits of its concordat with the state (1855). Bach had been the guiding spirit of the home administration even before the death of Schwarzenberg (April 3rd, 1852); while the interests of the Church had a strong supporter in Count Leo Thun; and the Emperor's adjutant-general, Count Grünne, was a most influential friend of the Government, which was distinguished by much administrative ability. In Prussia, the forms of constitutionalism were kept up under Manteuffel, one of the most pliable, yet, at the same time, one of the most tenacious of Prussian statesmen. But the preservation of these forms was partly accommodated to the reactionary romanticism of the King by the transformation of the First Chamber into a House of hereditary nobles and landowners, partly accompanied by a restoration of jurisdictions and representative systems dating from earlier days. In the lesser states, the constitutions granted before or in the years of political revolution (1848–9) had either already disappeared, or carried on a more or less precarious existence under the vigilant observation of the revived Diet, which had actually appointed a committee for the purpose. The Hesse-Cassel quarrel had, in 1852, seemed to have come to a conclusion by the return of the Elector Frederick William I to his capital, and the imposition by him upon his subjects of a new constitution, that of 1831 having been declared by the Diet incompatible with Federal law. The constitution of 1852 was, however, at no time completely accepted by the Chambers, which repeatedly protested against it; and the relations between the Elector and his subjects remained essentially unaltered. In 1855 the Elector's unwillingness to accept certain

changes in the ecclesiastical system of the electorate proposed by Hassenpflug's colleague, the ultra-Lutheran Vilmar, led to the dismissal of the whole of the Ministry, with Hassenpflug at its head; but the conflict was not closed by his quitting the scene. Yet more long-lived, and of far more wide-reaching importance, was the Schleswig-Holstein problem, which continued to press on the Diet and to demand the attention of the two Great Powers. But of this, the progress to its close will be most fitly summarised in our next chapter. So far as the internal affairs of Germany are concerned, the course of events in the decade which preceded the outbreak of the last Schleswig-Holstein War may seem to us visibly tending to a predestined end—widely different from that imagined by many contemporaries.

In the first instance, however, we have to recall an aspect of German affairs, which had not, like the political situation, reached a definite stage at the time of the Olmütz settlement. It was seen[1] how, before the death of Schwarzenberg in April 1852, the Austrian Government, which had achieved a complete victory over the political pretensions of the rival Great Power, had, in conformity with the enterprising commercial policy of Freiherr von Bruck (who held office as Minister of Commerce from 1840 to 1851, and again from 1855 to 1860), shown itself desirous of overthrowing the ascendancy which, in matters of trade, Prussia had, by means of the *Zollverein*, gradually established among the German secondary states. This ascendancy had bidden fair to be notably heightened by the treaty (September 7th, 1851) in which, notwithstanding the reactionary views of King Ernest Augustus and of King George V (who succeeded him two months later), Hanover, with Oldenburg, had agreed to join the *Zollverein* on January 1st, 1854, under conditions highly favourable to these two states;

[1] Vol. I, p. 539, note, *ante*.

and the secret negotiation of this treaty had provoked much jealousy among the other members of the Customs Union. Schwarzenberg and Bruck had not been slow to take advantage of this feeling, by anticipating the conference as to the renewal of the *Zollverein*, which all the states now included in it had been summoned to attend at Berlin in April 1852. Representatives of all the German Governments except the Prussian and the Thuringian, accordingly, met at Vienna in the preceding January. Here, proposals were brought forward intended as preliminary to an ultimate customs union between Austria and Germany at large; while, at the same time, a secret agreement was submitted to Bavaria, Württemberg, Saxony, the two Hesses and Nassau, for the formation by these states—should Prussia decline to modify the terms of the *Zollverein* in a protectionist sense—of a separate customs union with Austria. This scheme was afterwards discussed afresh at Darmstadt; but, though negotiations were set on foot with Prussia, she broke them off, and, thanks more especially to the strong free-trade feeling in Saxony, which overpowered the political friendliness of that Government to Austria, succeeded in maintaining the enlarged *Zollverein* on the old basis. After Schwarzenberg's death, his successor, Count von Buol-Schauenstein—an experienced diplomatist whose energy was to prove valuable in his dealings with the great political problems which awaited him—endeavoured to maintain a high tone in the commercial controversy, insisting on Austria's claim to the establishment of a customs union of which she should form part. But this was not accomplished, though Bruck, who was charged with a special mission to Berlin, succeeded in bringing about an equitable commercial treaty for twelve years between Austria and Prussia (February 19th, 1853), which, on the renewal of the *Zollverein* (April 4th), was joined by its other members. It was well that this solution of the difference between the two Great Powers was reached

in-time; for the determination of the new King of Hanover to maintain his sovereign autonomy to the full, more especially as against Prussia, might, at the last, have interfered with his adherence to the renewed *Zollverein*, and serious European complications were imminent which would have rendered the continuance of tension between the two German Great Powers highly inopportune.

The accession of King George V to the Hanoverian throne was in itself the reverse of favourable to the progress of constitutional life or the furtherance of national aspirations in Germany. His father, King Ernest Augustus, although hating, from the bottom of his heart, the constitutional changes which, in 1848, had overthrown the old-established power of the Hanoverian nobility, had declined to favour their attempt at preventing the consummation of these changes; and they had, accordingly, become law in September 1851, two months before the old King's death. But his successor, King George V, whose autocratic notions were intensified by the mental isolation largely due to the blindness which had befallen him in his childhood, and who cherished, in addition to his belief in his right divine, an unbounded faith in the destinies of the House of Guelf, had from the first made common cause with the claims of his nobility. He was encouraged by an '*inhibitorium*,' passed, about the time of his father's death, by the Frankfort 'Committee of Reaction,' which bade the Hanoverian Government delay further proceedings till a satisfactory report should have been received as to the grievances of the *Ritterschaft*. Thus, King George's first step was to appoint as the head of his Ministry Freiherr Eduard von Schele, the son of the Minister who had carried out the *coup d'état* of 1837. During his tenure of office (November 1851 to October 1853), the younger Schele made an honest effort to solve the problem before him by concessions to the nobility which should not be

destructive of the framework of the constitution. But his labours were in vain; and, after consultation with Otto von Bismarck (whose share in these transactions has been exaggerated, but is not to be altogether overlooked), a bolder method of action was adopted. A new head of the Government was found in von Lütcken, who enjoyed the confidence of the nobility; and the Federal Diet, having been informed of the validity of their grievances, was induced to demand from the Hanoverian Government a revision of the constitution practically amounting to its overthrow (April 1853). Hereupon, a new Ministry was called to power, consisting entirely of members of the extreme reactionary party, with Count von Kielmannsegg (very deaf) as its figure-head. Foreign Affairs were entrusted to Count Platen, who suited the King so well as to remain in office while George V remained on the throne; and the Home Office was taken by W. F. O. (afterwards Count) von Borries, an able and fanatical upholder of the right divine system of government—a miniature Strafford, some thought, in the service of a latter-day Charles the Martyr. The sway of this Government began with the dissolution of the Second Chamber and the issue of a royal ordinance (August 1st, 1855), promulgating one of the Federal decrees of the previous April and abolishing all the additions made to the constitution in 1848. With the *coup d'état* of August 1855, of which the responsibility falls on the reactionary Ministry, King George V and the Federal Diet at his back, a disastrous epoch set in for the Guelf dynasty, which, eleven years later, was to find a logical end[1]. In the

[1] At the root of the quarrel between the Kings of Hanover and their diets lay the question of the domains—as to whether these appertained to the sovereign's authority or were part of the national property. This question came to the front elsewhere (cf. vol. I, p. 113, *ante*), but was carried on with the greatest persistence in Hanover. For an account of the Hanoverian counter-revolution of

meantime, the Hanoverian constitution had been thoroughly revised in a reactionary sense, with the aid of the Federal ordinances as to the press and public meetings, and further police measures of great stringency.

But the chief point of view from which a friendly understanding, at all events, between the two German Great Powers seemed imperative, was that of the serious European complications which came to a head in 1854. Already by the autumn of the preceding year the outbreak, sooner or later, of war between the Western Powers and Russia had become a certainty; and the question as to the part which Austria and Prussia would take in the conflict was of great moment. The boast of Napoleon III (March 1854) was beyond the mark, that Austria was adverse to Russia, while he was himself on friendly terms with Prussia. But, though the Emperor Francis Joseph could not forget Russia's service to Austria in restoring Hungary to her rule, his Ministers could not be blind to the danger of allowing the power of Russia to establish itself on the eastern frontier of his empire and to be accepted by the Christian subjects of the Porte as their main support in a rising likely enough to spread to their fellow southern Slavs under Austrian rule. On the other hand, though German Liberalism both abhorred and feared the dominance of Russia, Prussia had no direct interest whatever in a quarrel which concerned neither herself nor Germany at large; and, notwithstanding the cordial relations between the British and Prussian Courts, she had no wish to promote the political designs of the Emperor of the French, the leading partner in the Western alliance. Still, it was

the years 1851–5 see H. Oncken's important work, *Rudolf von Bennigsen*, vol. I (1910), pp. 258–72. As Bennigsen demonstrated, the Federal Diet had no lawful authority for ordering the Hanoverian Government to change the constitution without consulting the Estates of the kingdom.

Russia who had broken the peace; and, in the first instance, the envoys of the four other Great Powers met in conference at Vienna to see whether the consequences of this step could still be averted. Then came the sudden blow of Sinope, and, in February 1854, the enquiry of the Western Powers whether Austria and Prussia would treat Russia's refusal to evacuate the Danubian Principalities as a *casus belli*. Austria replied that, should Russia refuse, with her must lie the consequences of her action, while that of Austria would be decided solely by considerations affecting herself. Prussia, on the other hand, resolved on neutrality.

In political life, nations are little apt to 'put themselves in the place' of one another—least of all when their own interests are affected by the action, or inaction, of their neighbours. In 1852, British as well as Russian statesmanship had ignored the wishes of the German people in the Schleswig-Holstein difficulty; but the soreness which then for the first time began to make itself felt between British and German popular feeling was as yet of slight importance. In 1854, the refusal of Prussia to take part in a conflict into which Great Britain herself had only reluctantly entered, and the wisdom of her participation in which remains, at this day, more doubtful than ever, called forth invective and insult such as could not be expected to remain wholly unremembered. Lord Clarendon, and with more bluntness Lord Palmerston, in the various stages of the conflict, made no secret of being in accord with the popular sentiment. Yet it may be well to place on record an expression of opinion that among the sins of omission which discredited Prussia, and the Manteuffel *régime*, in these inglorious years, should not be reckoned the refusal of the Prussian Government to take an active part in the war against Russia.

Had the decision fallen otherwise, it would not have been without supporters. Apart from the rooted antipathy

to Russia, which was one of the accepted marks of German middle-class Liberalism, there was a group of persons of high standing in the Prussian legal or diplomatic world who would have rejoiced had the opportunity been seized of freeing European politics from the incubus of the overbearing personal influence of Tsar Nicholas I. They were known as the party of the (*Preussische*) *Wochenblatt*, the name of their organ in the press[1], or as that of Bethmann-Hollweg, who was for some years their leader. The scion of a wealthy family of bankers at Frankfort, he had gained high distinction as professor of law at Berlin and Bonn, of which University he afterwards became curator, and had taken the leading part in the first General Synod of the Prussian United Church in 1846. His devout evangelical churchmanship commended him to the King, though he was in favour of the separation of Church and state; but he and his followers were staunch upholders of the constitution of 1850 and of Prussia's responsibility towards Germany. Other members of this group of politicians were Count Albert Pourtalès, in whose house at Berlin its meetings were held, and Count Robert von der Goltz, afterwards known by the cleverness and selfconsciousness displayed by him as ambassador at Paris. They were not without hopes of a general concurrence in their views on the part of the Prince of Prussia, who was in favour of reading a lesson to the Tsar without seeking to destroy his power. But, in the Prussian Government itself, and in the immediate surroundings of the King, these views met with no

[1] The *Preussische Wochenblatt* appeared from 1851 to 1858; Bethmann-Hollweg led the faction till 1855. In 1858, as will be seen, he joined the Schwerin-Auerswald Ministry; he resigned office early in 1862. For an account of this interesting phase of German party history and of a group of politicians whose leaning to England and English constitutional ideas was one of their distinctive features, see Walter Schmidt, *Die Partei Bethmann-Hollweg und die Reaktion in Preussen*, 1850–8 (1910).

response; Manteuffel had no wish to break through the existing friendly relations with Austria; but he was far from any thought of joining her in a declaration of war against Russia. By the spring of 1854, the plan of a fusion between the *Wochenblatt* party and the supporters of the Government had broken down, and the triumph of the *Kreuzzeitung* faction was assured. To the chief members of the Camarilla and their friends, who had the King's ear, and in many of whom religious enthusiasm was blended with political sympathies, the idea of a war on behalf of Mohammedan Turkey and against the conservative Tsar seemed impious and unnatural. And there were others who, viewing the situation either on a broad historical basis, or with a farsighted recognition of the tasks awaiting Prussia at no distant date nearer home, raised their voices in favour of neutrality. Ranke, who about this time was named a member of the reconstructed *Staatsrat*, was specially called upon for an opinion on the present acute stage of the Oriental question; while Bismarck, at this time Prussian envoy at the Federal Diet, protested against the tame notion of merely saying ditto to Austria, and when (as he already frequently was) consulted by the King, declined to recommend Prussian intervention.

In no responsible statesman of the day were the sympathies with the Western Powers stronger than in Bunsen, the British Minister at the Court of St James's; but his intimation to Clarendon (March 1854) of Prussia's desire for the humiliation of Russia in the Baltic only led to his recall[1]. He was succeeded by Count Albrecht von Bernstorff, who was in touch with the *Wochenblatt* politicians, though not a member of their party[2].

[1] As to his memorandum of April 1854, and the scheme of obtaining, in return for active cooperation with the Western Powers, their approval of the annexation of Schleswig-Holstein to Prussia, see Bismarck, *Gedanken*, vol. I, pp. 112–3.

[2] Count Bernstorff (a Lauenburger by birth, and hence frequently

On March 11th, 1854, King Frederick William IV, having learnt that Austria was not prepared to enter without Prussia into a declared alliance with the Western Powers, addressed a letter to the Emperor Francis Joseph, in which he pressed the conclusion of an offensive and defensive alliance between the two German Great Powers, which should take in the Germanic Confederation. Such an alliance was welcome to Austria, more especially as Prussia ultimately consented to the addition of an article guaranteeing the security of the dominions of Austria even if she should be obliged to enforce by arms the evacuation by Russia of the Danubian Principalities. On April 20th the alliance was, accordingly, concluded, with a supplementary military convention binding Prussia, if necessary, to assemble on her eastern frontier a force of 100,000 men and to raise the whole active strength of her army to double that number. But, though the two Governments invited the other states of the Confederation to adhere to this alliance, its purpose remained doubtful, and the attitude of the Prussian Government tended, more and more, to the preservation of neutrality. Bunsen, as has been seen, now retired into private life (June); the Minister of War, E. von Bonin, who had not been disinclined to a war in conjunction with the Western Powers against Russia, was

decried as a Schleswig-Holsteiner by his political adversaries) was, by the insight as well as by the self-control marking his statesmanship, worthy of his lineage. As Prussian Minister at Vienna, he had come into frequent collision with Schwarzenberg, whose hostility he incurred, while acquiring the reputation of steady opposition to Austria. After Olmütz he was recalled by Manteuffel, with whose policy he was out of sympathy; and, after two years at Naples, was in May 1854 promoted to London, where he represented Prussia (and afterwards Germany) with remarkable ability and tact till his death in 1873, except during his brief tenure of the Foreign Office at Berlin, as to which see *post*. For a full account of his career see *The Bernstorff Papers*, a translation of K. Ringhoffer's biography, 2 vols. (1908). He was misjudged by Disraeli (*Life*, vol. IV, p. 344).

dismissed from his post; and, most significant of all, the Prince of Prussia, who had strongly protested against this step, was himself relieved, for the present, from attendance on the duties of his military office and even threatened with internment in a fortress.

The feeling in the secondary states, which was declared at fresh conferences, held at Bamberg (May 25th)—whence the term 'Bambergers'—was in favour of joining the Austro-Prussian alliance, but with a view to a genuine neutrality; and a meeting between the Emperor of Austria and the King of Prussia at Tetschen (June) made no further change in the situation. Austria, however, now took steps of her own, concluding a treaty with the Porte as to a joint occupation of the Principalities, and, though in June the Russian troops returned to the left bank of the Danube, carried on negotiations with the Western Powers as to conditions of peace. The joint demands of the three Powers—the 'Four Points'—were hereupon communicated to the Russian Government, and at the same time made known to the Prussian.

At the end of August, Russia rejected the Four Points; and, early in the following month, the forces of the Western Powers landed in the Crimea and laid siege to Sebastopol. In France, as in England, the feeling against the German Powers rose to a great height; and it needed only the false news of the fall of Sebastopol (which reached Vienna on September 28th) to impel Count Buol to try to mend his ways. An offensive alliance was concluded (December 2nd) by Austria and the Western Powers, which had now raised their demands upon Russia, and was communicated to Prussia for her acceptance. This alliance was all the more displeasing to the Prussian Government, since it had agreed (November 26th) to add to the April treaty a promise of adhesion to the Four Points and an extension of its guarantee to the Austrian troops in the Principalities.

Although the divergence between the two German Great Powers was for a time kept secret, and the Federal Diet, accordingly, agreed (December 9th) to adhere to the enlargement of the compact between them, the King of Prussia, in conformity with the judgment prevailing among his advisers, refused to join the Triple Alliance, at all events without further definition of the conditions of peace to be imposed on Russia. At the same time, he made a characteristic attempt to exercise a personal influence upon British policy by means of a special mission to Queen Victoria, which was to appeal to the Protestant sympathies between the two countries. Nothing came either of Count von Usedom's mission, though he spent some seven months in England[1], or of a less notable one of General von Wedell, the Governor of Luxemburg, to the Emperor Napoleon III; nor, on the other side, was Count Buol able to force Prussia's hand by proposing that, in view of the danger of a Russian attack upon the Austrian dominions, she should carry out the April treaty by placing 200,000 men under arms, the Confederation providing a proportionate force. Prussia declined to mobilise; and the secondary states, headed by Bavaria and Saxony, followed suit, an all but unanimous resolution being passed at the Diet (February 8th, 1855) that, in the absence of any danger of a Russian attack, only a modified mobilisation (*Kriegsbereitschaft*) should be ordered. Count Buol's forward policy had met with a very manifest rebuff; and the illhumour thus excited was heightened by the alliance concluded (December 26th) by the Western Powers with Austria's irreconcilable foe, Sardinia.

Thus, Prussia, which had sent no plenipotentiary to the first Conference on the conditions of peace between the

[1] Very greatly to Bernstorff's annoyance (see *Bernstorff Papers*, vol. I, p. 258). Usedom, besides being known to entertain Liberal ideas, was married to a clever Englishwoman.

other four Powers (December 28th), was likewise unrepresented when their plenipotentiaries met again, with a fifth sent by the Porte, for the transaction of business (March 16th, 1855), a fortnight after the death of Tsar Nicholas I. Austria no longer urged terms certain, if insisted upon, to result in the prolongation of a war which neither of the Western Powers would be content to end prematurely; and, though Russia still refused to listen to the proposal to neutralise the Black Sea, she was determined to make an earnest effort to meet the difficulties in the way of the conclusion of peace, among which that Black Sea question was the chief. Thus, the Conference of envoys was turned into one of leading European statesmen. Drouyn de Lhuys, who avowed that he had the alliance between France and Austria at heart even more than the conclusion of peace with Russia, now sought to gain over Austria by offering Russia better terms, yet such as he thought she would still refuse; but Buol made a counterproposal of conditions even less unfavourable (the limitation of the Russian fleet in the Black Sea to its numbers before the outbreak of the war). Though, however, Lord John Russell concurred, and it seemed for a moment as if the efforts of France and Austria must lead either to peace or to the participation of Austria in the war, neither the Emperor Napoleon nor Lord Palmerston was disposed to acquiesce in so lenient a course; and the Vienna Conferences, together with the chance of an Austro-French alliance, came to an end together.

So far, though isolated, Prussia had no reason to regret her isolation. She had avoided incurring the illwill of Russia, and her policy had been accepted by the lesser states of Germany in preference to that of Austria, whose peace policy, after costing her a war expenditure she could ill afford, had utterly broken down at Vienna[1]. Buol's

[1] Cf. the summary in *Denkwürdigkeiten von O. von Manteuffel*, vol. III, p. 21.

self-confidence had, however, not yet deserted him; and he was encouraged by the assurances of the Western Powers that Austria's primacy in Germany would be at an end, if she were to follow the example of Prussia. When, after the fall of Sebastopol, in September 1855, the French Emperor began to show a disposition towards peace, it was once more Austria that came forward with mediatory proposals, which the new Tsar, Alexander II, attempted to meet halfway. But the lead had passed out of her hands, and on February 25th, 1856, the Peace Congress opened at Paris.

At the first meeting of the Congress, Count Cavour put in an appearance for Sardinia; but it was only at the second meeting (February 28th) that Austria and Russia proposed that Prussia should be invited to send two plenipotentiaries, it being resolved on the motion of Lord Clarendon not to summon them till the main points at issue should have been settled. Bismarck was almost beside himself with disgust[1]. Prussia's belated admission served no purpose except to mark formally her pretension to be regarded as one of the Great Powers, while it made her jointly responsible for decisions in which she had had no part. Neither in the discussion on Eastern affairs nor in that on Italian at Paris did Manteuffel, as joint Prussian plenipotentiary with Count Hatzfeldt, take any substantial share, though, as will be seen, he exerted himself actively in the Neufchâtel business. So far as the main issues of the Peace Congress were concerned, there was a widespread, though not really well-founded feeling, that Prussia had suffered humiliation. Meanwhile, the German secondary states hugged the thought that, by not following Austria implicitly in the matter of war and peace, they had vindicated their own sovereign independence and the importance of their collective action

[1] See his letters to Gerlach in *Gedanken und Erinnerungen*, vol. I, p. 117.

or inaction; and Austria had failed either to inflict a momentous blow upon her eastern, or to assert a decisive control over the action of her German, rival. Although Prussia had entered late into the Congress, she had, at more than one point, proved indisposed to second, or even to support, Austrian action. Thus, there was no wish, on either side, to renew the alliance of April 1854, which Austria had at first hoped to conclude *in perpetuum*, but which, in accordance with the Prussian counterdraft, had been limited to the duration of the war. Nor did Prussia join in the triple agreement between Great Britain, France and Austria for the maintenance of the integrity of the Ottoman dominions (April 15th, 1856). In the meantime, thanks to the progress of the negotiations for the marriage of the Princess Royal to Prince Frederick William, the eldest son of the Prince of Prussia—a union at first anathematised by the leading English journal[1]—the general aspect of the relations between Prussia and Great Britain was brightening; and there could be little doubt as to the direction in which the political successes of Napoleon III, already partially disclosed at the Peace Congress, were tending. His wish to conciliate the goodwill of Prussia, while pursuing a policy of which the result could hardly but be a conflict with Austria, was clearly shown in an episode which forms a curious postscript to relations noted earlier in this narrative[2].

Since, in 1848, the Neufchâtellois had thrown off the easy yoke of the King of Prussia's sovereignty, their community had been thoroughly transformed. Within a few years, half of the inhabitants of the new canton had come

[1] Cf. *The Bernstorff Papers*, vol. I, p. 310. Duke Ernest II of Coburg-Gotha, *Aus meinem Leben und aus meiner Zeit*, vol. II, p. 338, goes so far as to describe this comment as 'the hardest words ever uttered in the English press against Prussia and the Hohenzollerns.'

[2] Cf. vol. I, pp. 237 f.; 431.

to consist of immigrants—citizens of only two years' standing; and the constitution had become a pure democracy, in which no class distinctions remained and the municipal authorities were elected by universal suffrage. As a matter of course, this state of things was intolerable to many of the earlier stock of inhabitants, and more especially to the old noble families, whose influence had hitherto been paramount in the rural districts of the principality. Their complaints met with a most sympathetic reception at Berlin, where the King, with a reiteration that would have been altogether pathetic, had there not been in it an element of the ludicrous, had persisted in dwelling upon his rights on Neufchâtel and his affection for the loyalists remaining there. In the London Conferences of 1852, the Great Powers had, on the sagacious suggestion of Baron Brunnow, recognised the rights of the Prussian Crown to Neufchâtel (which it had never surrendered); and at Paris in 1856, when the Prussian plenipotentiaries had been admitted to the Peace Congress, they had been instructed to recall those rights to the remembrance of the Great Powers—but this time without any result. The Neufchâtel loyalists, accordingly, resolved upon a *coup de main* on their own account. A preliminary enquiry at Berlin was met, on the part of Manteuffel, by an urgent warning to desist; the King's silence, however, was interpreted as consent. On September 3rd, 1856, the castle at Neufchâtel was seized, and the municipal authorities were arrested by a band of insurgent loyalists; but, elsewhere in the canton, the republican majority rose in prompt self-defence; and, under the direction of two Federal commissioners, the canton was occupied by a body of Berne and Vaud militia, who were ruthlessly quartered on actual or suspected partisans of the rising. Many arrests took place, and a number of royalists were charged with high treason and ordered to be brought before the Federal state tribunal.

King Frederick William IV, who, as was soon to become apparent, was mentally no longer able to bear any extreme agitation, was grievously affected by the tidings of these occurrences. What chiefly pressed upon his chivalrous spirit was the apprehension that the champions of his rights were to be arraigned as criminals and would probably be sentenced to long and harsh imprisonment. He, at once, caused representations for their unconditional release to be addressed to the Federal Government and the Great Powers. The latter replied in varying tones of sympathy, Buol requesting to know in what particular way Austria could be of service, and Palmerston advising the Prussian Crown to renounce its rights to Neufchâtel, and thus secure the goodwill of the Swiss Federal authorities towards the prisoners. The Swiss Government, over which the radical Staempfli presided, would hear of nothing but renunciation; and the legal proceedings against the prisoners were ordered to take their course.

The King of Prussia, whose strangely compounded motives of action were once more exhibited in his treatment of the last important difficulty of his public life, was not unwilling to take into consideration the question of renouncing his rights on Neufchâtel; but he was resolved, in the first instance, to secure the release of the prisoners. And this he proposed to effect through an auxiliary whom in former days it had been his habit to regard with unmitigated distrust. Napoleon III had, in answer to the first Prussian dispatch, given it as his opinion that the Swiss Confederation was likely to proceed in accordance with the *de facto* position, and that Prussia would do well to shake off the Neufchâtel incubus altogether. Hereupon, Frederick William IV addressed an autograph letter to the Emperor, written, as it averred, 'in tears and with a bleeding heart,' appealing to a friendship which it only depended upon the Emperor to secure as a permanent possession, and stating

that, if the King could not obtain the release of the prisoners, he could not refrain from exacting it arms in hand. The royal letter proved a thorough diplomatic success. Napoleon, whose immediate policy nothing could have suited so well as to lay Prussia under a great obligation, answered that France could not without disquietude witness the appearance of a Prussian army on Swiss soil, and that he would do his best to secure the satisfaction of the King's wish by pacific means. But, on being pressed by the Emperor, the Swiss Federal Council either could not or would not credit the correctness of his advice, and was confirmed in its judgment by manifestations of goodwill on the part of the British Government, while the Austrian (though it advised the release of the captives) observed an attitude of calm. After two days' debate, the Council warily replied that the release must be preceded by the opening of a negotiation as to the renunciation of the Prussian rights on Neufchâtel; and from this position it was not to be moved when the Federal Diet at Frankfort resolved to support the Prussian demand for the release of the prisoners, though following Austria's lead in not encouraging Prussia to resort to military action. Unwilling to accept failure, the Emperor Napoleon now, having confidentially ascertained on what terms the King of Prussia would, *after* the release of the prisoners, renounce his Neufchâtel rights, used his personal influence with General Dufour[1] to bring about the desired result. At the same time, his advice herein agreeing with Bismarck's, he counselled the Prussian Government to begin military preparations. Prussia let it be known that January 2nd, 1857, was the date at which, unless the release had previously taken place, the mobilisation of about 100,000 troops would begin—a term afterwards extended to January 15th. On December 17th, the *Moniteur* expressed approval of Prussia's

[1] The victorious commander of the Federal troops in the *Sonderbund* War.

action; and thus, on January 13th, the Swiss Federal Council, to which Great Britain was known to have made acceptable offers as to a guarantee of the King's renunciation by the Western Powers, gave way, and, on the 16th, confirmed the proposal made for quashing further proceedings against the prisoners and ordering their release.

With the aid, above all, of his newly-made Western friend, King Frederick William IV had thus won the point of honour on which he had chivalrously insisted. To settle the rest of the problem—the future relations between Neufchâtel and the Prussian Crown—a Conference was held at Paris, in March 1857, between plenipotentiaries of the four neutral Great Powers, who were afterwards joined by Count Hatzfeldt, for Prussia and (to the King's disgust) Dr Kern, for the Swiss Confederation. After a long series of discussions, in which the Swiss side was energetically taken by Great Britain, a settlement was reached. The King of Prussia was to retain the title of Prince of Neufchâtel and to receive a million dollars in compensation of his rights. A full amnesty was to be granted for all political offences, and the state was to retain the ecclesiastical property, though indemnifying the Church for it. When the Swiss Council had accepted these proposals, the King allowed himself to be persuaded—once more by the Emperor Napoleon—to approve them, with the exception of the pecuniary compensation, which he declined; and, on May 26th, the treaty was finally concluded between the four neutral Powers, Prussia and the Swiss Confederation. Such was the end of the Neufchâtel affair, which, as Manteuffel had complained in the middle of its course, 'would be the death of him[1].'

Sybel, of whose lucid narrative of these complicated

[1] *Denkwürdigkeiten von O. von Manteuffel*, vol. III, p. 130.

transactions[1] the above is a condensed summary, is of opinion that they moved and tortured the mind, heart and nerves of Frederick William IV more violently than any other series of events since the days of March 1848. At home, his rule had become a more or less mechanical continuance of the reactionary system which the prudence of Manteuffel preserved from running into sudden extremes, but which inspired no real confidence in any political party. The overwhelming majority obtained by the conservatives in the elections of 1855 encouraged the King to a revival of his visionary project of overthrowing the 'paper' constitution, and substituting for it another piece of paper, in the shape of a royal patent creating Estates with taxing, but not legislative, powers; but even Gerlach was against the building of such castles in the air[2]. In the following year, there was talk of Ministerial changes; and the King proposed that Bismarck should be made Minister of Finance, with a view to his afterwards exchanging this for the Foreign department[3]. But no such appointment was made, and, in spite of other personal difficulties, which must be here passed by, the Manteuffel Ministry continued unchanged, with the system of government which, aided by a powerfully organised police, it upheld[4]. As a matter of fact, the personal influence of Leopold von Gerlach and the Camarilla upon the King overpowered Manteuffel's; but the Minister was recognised by Gerlach as indispensable, and in return

[1] *Die Begründung des deutschen Reiches* (popular edition), vol. II, pp. 181–98.

[2] *Denkwürdigkeiten von Manteuffel*, vol. III, pp. 97–8.

[3] Bismarck laughed this proposal out of court, saying that the acceptance of it would prove him to be possessed of Lord John Russell's temerity. *Ib.*, p. 119.

[4] Its organiser and director was K. L. F. von Hinckeldey, an official of much personal power and ability, whose death, in 1856, in a duel provoked by his proceedings against the Berlin Jockey Club, made a profound sensation and called forth much sympathy.

regarded the Adjutant-general's dominating intimacy with the King as a necessary evil[1]. A personal difficulty between the Prime Minister and the leader of the Camarilla, which arose out of a theft of letters written by Gerlach that found their way to the French embassy and to Manteuffel (1855)[2], had been gradually allayed.

Unlike Prussia's relations with France, those with Austria had not been advanced in cordiality by the Neufchâtel affair; and neither the long-lived controversy with regard to the garrisoning of the Federal fortress Rastadt, carried on at the Diet in 1856–7, nor the discussions there as to Federal reform proposals in the latter of these years, tended to bring about more cordial cooperation between the two German Great Powers. As to these proposals, devised by the unresting Saxon Minister Beust under the aegis of Buol, the vigilant criticisms of the Prussian plenipotentiary at Frankfort, Otto von Bismarck, effectually prevented much progress being made. King Frederick William IV, never appearing to be at the end of his resources, but rarely able to bring them to any practical issue, now bethought himself of the expedient of a personal interview with the Emperor Francis Joseph, and paid him a visit at Vienna on July 8th, 1857. It was on his return *viâ* Dresden that he fell seriously ill at Pillnitz. Although he still carried on his royal duties for a little longer, his mental powers proved to have broken down; and, on October 3rd, an ordinance signed by him appointed his brother the Prince of Prussia his vicegerent (*Stellvertreter*) in the government of the kingdom for a term of three months.

This appointment was, in January 1858 (the month of the marriage of Prince Frederick William to the Princess Royal), renewed, as a matter of course, for a further three months, although there was little or no hope of the patient's

[1] *Denkwürdigkeiten*, vol. III, p. 180.

[2] For a long account of it, see *ib.*, pp. 83–97.

recovery and the constitution required the establishment of a regency in the event of the permanent incapacitation of the sovereign. But both the Queen, who naturally feared for the effect of such a step upon the King, and the Camarilla, who rightly apprehended the extinction of their political influence, favoured delay even after the vice-gerency had been once more prolonged, at the end of April, for three months. Manteuffel, who behaved with great propriety during this long-protracted crisis, though he could hardly be expected to press for prompt action, was kept as much as possible away from the King, who was, about midsummer, moved to Tegernsee. Here fresh intrigues began. An attempt was made to obtain the royal patient's signature to a letter in which he should express his desire to resume the exercise of his sovereign rights; and there was talk of a coregency of the Prince, and even of a joint regency between the Queen and himself. But the Prince, with his usual straightforwardness of judgment, perceived that neither the letter nor the spirit of the constitution would be satisfied by indefinitely prolonging the situation. Moreover, the Chambers would soon have to be dissolved, and a decision seemed unavoidable. Early in August, therefore, he called upon the Ministry for an opinion as to the requirements of the constitution; and Manteuffel showed insight as well as patriotism in recommending that a general election turning on the cry of 'King or regent' should be avoided. The majority of his colleagues agreed, the reactionary Westphalen holding out stoutly against a regency; and, after careful deliberation, the Prince informed the Queen that he concurred in the opinion of the Ministry. At the last, both the Queen and Leopold von Gerlach objected to the word *regent*; but in vain. In the end, she reluctantly took the opportunity of medical advice being given that the King should spend the winter in Italy, to advise him to appoint his brother Regent.

The King signed the deed of appointment without a word, and then burst into tears (September 7th)[1].

The reign of Frederick William IV was virtually at an end, though his life lasted till January 2nd, 1861. Enough has been said in the course of this brief narrative to leave no doubt as to the charm of a personality which had in it at least this element of greatness: that it laid a spell upon the loyal service of some of the ablest and most single-minded public men of his day—of a Radowitz, a Bunsen, or, again, of conservatives such as Alvensleben and even the passionate enemy of revolution who was rapidly developing into the Bismarck of the future; not to speak of Alexander von Humboldt, who was one of the King's chosen associates, or of Ranke, whose posthumous estimate of his intellectual powers is as free from exaggeration as it is from flattery[2]. On the other hand, what has been said here of his inability to confront the great crises, and thus to meet the supreme opportunities, of his public life will have sufficed to show why he hopelessly broke down before them. It was not because of any want of sympathy with great issues—above all, with the call upon him, as King of Prussia, to be the sword-arm of Germany in her great national effort; nor even because of his early romantic

[1] Sybel's relation of these transactions is supplemented by a long and highly interesting account in Manteuffel's *Denkwürdigkeiten*, vol. III, pp. 256 ff., 294 ff. For the regency ordinance, see *ib.*, p. 321. It seems as if Bernhardi (*Aus dem Leben Theodor von Bernhardis*, vol. III, p. 89) was right in saying that to Manteuffel belongs the credit of the regency being carried through.

[2] See *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie*, and *Werke*, vols. LI and LII. For a singularly sympathetic personal portrait, see Duke Ernest II of Coburg-Gotha's *Aus meinem Leben*, etc., vol. I, pp. 611–4, where particular stress is laid on the receptivity of the King's mind, which gave value to his judgment not only on questions of art, but even in military matters. Yet, as the same writer says elsewhere (vol. II, p. 340), those who knew him had learnt to interpret what the King said by the influence upon him of momentary feeling.

prejudices, his hatred of constitutionalism as a paper interference between a God-given king and his faithful people, and his abhorrence of revolution as the work of the devil. The movements of his mind were so quick, and the resources on which it was always able to fall back were so abundant, that he never seemed to be checkmated by the course of events, and, if he could not carry out his wishes in the way he preferred, often appeared to follow for a time where he had intended to lead. But, before long, he hardly ever failed to return to his aspirations, his fancies, his predilections and his prejudices; and the doubtful labour of holding him down to the line of action which seemed in his own and in his monarchy's interest had to be begun over again. In a word, with his many and brilliant gifts, he lacked that of being able either to choose his own course of action resolutely, or to follow steadfastly what he had recognised as, in the circumstances, the most expedient counsel. Thus, his lot, as a king whose leadership had been necessary both for his own monarchy and for the nation whose future that monarchy was called upon to direct, was failure; and such remains the note of the reign of one of the most gifted, and one of the most unfortunate, of modern sovereigns.

And now, in his place, there stood erect William Prince of Prussia, the son of the same father, and like him faithful to what he had, however slowly, come to recognise as his duty, and of the same mother, the incarnation of a people's aspirations for better days—but as different from his predecessor in character as he was in the destinies that awaited him. The fierce, and not unfrequently false, light that beats upon a throne is wont to cast inimical rays upon a prince holding the position of heir-presumptive; and deep shadows of unpopularity fall, sometimes most unjustly, upon one whose subsequent occupancy of the throne is to bring him nothing but honour and affection from his

subjects. More than one example of this double experience might be cited from German history in this period—a striking instance is that of the Prince of Prussia's intimate friend and correspondent Prince, afterwards King, John of Saxony. The Prince of Prussia himself, who at the time of his accession to royal authority was sixty years of age, was a soldier by early training, and made few pretensions of other sorts. In the troubles of 1848, this had sufficed to mark him out for the unreasoning hatred of the populace, in face of which there was nothing for him but to withdraw. After his return from England, he had, in 1849, done good service as commander-in-chief of the Prussian military forces in Baden, without incurring personal unpopularity by the success of the campaign. Although he had inherited something of his father's lack of self-confidence[1], he was in the habit of thinking for himself in matters political; but he avoided unnecessary utterances of opinions likely to conflict with the policy of the King and his Ministers. The influence of his consort, a Weimar princess of great quickness of mind and corresponding self-confidence, was unmistakably in favour of the constitutional principles formed on the English model and approved at more than one Thuringian Court; and it was part of the Prince's nature and training never to go back from a promise made or an assurance given. The residence of the Prince and Princess at Coblenz, from the close of 1849 onwards, prevented their Court from taking up an attitude of opposition to that of Potsdam; but there was little in common between the political ideas of the King and those of his destined successor, and, in the ultra-conservative spheres of influence near the throne, scant goodwill was felt towards the tendencies supposed to find favour with the Prince and his environment.

In the earlier days, when the Hesse-Cassel difficulty had entered an acute stage, the Prince's Prussian pride had,

[1] Bernhardi, vol. III, p. 69.

naturally enough, resented the policy which ended in the humiliation of Olmütz. Cordiality was out of the question between himself and the Manteuffel Ministry, in whose constitutionalism he put no trust. His own was of a practical rather than a *doctrinaire* kind; he meant to keep his word, and to preserve the mean between the constitutionalism which in England seemed to him too wide, and in Hanover and Electoral Hesse too narrow, for the requirements of Prussia[1]. We have seen how, in the matter of Prussia's attitude in the Russian war, his sympathies had been so strongly suspected of lying in the direction of intervention as to cause the suspension of his military appointments. He had since been subjected to much calumny, at home as well as in England. On the German question, while, at the time of his accession to power he still shared his royal brother's feelings of friendship for the House of Habsburg, he had long been fully aware that Prussia could not acquire the leadership in German affairs without a struggle; already when, in 1849, he assumed the Baden command, he told General von Natzmer that 'whosoever desires to rule Germany, must first conquer it: the thing, manifestly, cannot be done *à la* Gagern[2].'

At the present moment, when he found himself actually at the head of the state, he was fully aware that the time had come for administrative changes to which the public had long been looking forward. Manteuffel himself was not discredited, but used up; and, notwithstanding his loyalty to the Crown, and his administrative ability and intelligence, his name had never been one to conjure with. Even a conservative like Savigny thought that, hard as it might seem, it would damage the Prince to keep Manteuffel in

[1] See the account of his conversation with King Maximilian of Bavaria (in 1860), *ap.* Oncken, *Rudolf von Bennigsen*, vol. I, pp. 426–7.

[2] Sybel, vol. II, p. 210.

office[1]. But it was by no means a Liberal Government of an advanced kind which, on the eve of his accession to royal authority, the Prince had in view. Previously to his acceptance of the regency, he had thought of putting Alvensleben into office, who in his turn had suggested Bismarck as Minister for Foreign Affairs; but, before this combination was attempted, Alvensleben died (May 2nd, 1858) and the Prince bethought himself of advisers of a different type.

The first act of the regency was the dismissal (October 10th) of the Minister of the Interior, Westphalen, who had carried his legal doubts so far as to complain of a discrepancy between the ordinances signed by the King and the Prince-regent respectively. His place was taken by Chief-president von Flottwell[2], who was too advanced in years for his appointment to have much significance. The Prussian diet met on October 20th, and was dissolved on the 26th, after the Regent had taken the oath to the constitution. The Ministry, with an absence of false delicacy much approved by Leopold von Gerlach[3] (the day of the Camarilla had, of course, gone for ever), hereupon drew up a report in which they represented the public expediency of their continuance in office. But, on November 3rd, the Regent, in a perfectly straightforward statement to Manteuffel, announced his intention of changing his Government; and what it became the fashion to call the 'New Era' began.

Of Manteuffel and his ten years' Ministry it is unnecessary to say more. The Regent's communication had been accompanied by a private letter, in which he expressed his gratitude for the Minister's long services, and offered

[1] Bernhardi, vol. III, p. 93.

[2] Cf. vol. I, p. 233. As to Westphalen's audacious attempt to make the Regent appear responsible for the Government interference, which he disapproved, in elections, see Bernhardi, vol. III, pp. 75–6.

[3] *Denkwürdigkeiten von Manteuffel*, vol. III, pp. 333–4.

him the title of Count, with other honours. He respectfully refused everything except the pension due to him, and asked only to be allowed to 'depart in peace.' While his conduct on this occasion was marked by unostentatious dignity, the address to his electors that followed some time later (May 23rd, 1860) may be regarded as a valediction worthy of the services which he had rendered to Prussia and her monarchy. The passage describing the Olmütz episode, which even among Prussian conservatives there were not wanting some to cast in his teeth, as 'one of those hard errands the accomplishment of which means true knight's service,' is devoid neither of veracity nor of pathos. With regard to his whole political career, we may agree with Leopold von Gerlach, that if, as the latter opines, Manteuffel followed the right track, it is futile to dwell persistently on his faults and weaknesses. Whether or not his own review of what was achieved for Prussia under his conduct of affairs be accepted, it is certain that he accomplished the main object of his political life—the conservation of Prussia's strength for the efforts of the future[1].

Notwithstanding his unwillingness to put himself personally forward, Manteuffel had been one of the earliest Minister-presidents who was such in fact as well as in name. As his successor in this office the Regent chose the Prince Karl Anton of Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen[2], who, though a prince of great good sense, as he was to show on a later memorable occasion, and genuinely Liberal in his principles, remained more in the background than had been hoped. It was the opinion of excellent judges that the foreign affairs of Prussia could not have been in better hands than his; but the Regent objected to such an appointment.

[1] As to this address, see *Denkwürdigkeiten*, vol. III, pp. 354 f.

[2] He had in December 1849 resigned his principality in favour of the King of Prussia, who, in 1850, took possession of both the Hohenzollern principalities thus made over to him.

The most important member of his Ministry was Rudolf von Auerswald, Minister without portfolio, who had from his youth up been intimately known to both the King and the Regent and who, as has been seen[1], had by reason of his Liberal opinions been included in Hansemann's Ministry of 1848. He had afterwards been Chief-president of the Rhine province, but was dismissed from this office in 1852 as an opponent of the reactionary policy of the Manteuffel Ministry. In July 1859 Flottwell's place as Minister of the Interior was taken by Count Maximilian von Schwerin-Putzar, who as President of the Chamber of Deputies and a steady opponent of the Ministry of Reaction had long been regarded as one of the trustworthiest members of the Old Liberal party. His bluff manner, however, covered a curious unwillingness to put a stop to administrative abuses. Count Alexander von Schleinitz remained at the Foreign Office, where, though his cautious, not to say timid, conduct of affairs found little favour either with the Liberals or with Bismarck, he was held for a time by the confidence of the Regent and his consort; and Bonin returned to the Ministry of War. Neither of these could be regarded as party politicians. Von der Heydt (Commerce) and Simons (Justice) remained in office; Bethmann-Hollweg (Worship and Education), though his Liberal political opinions were to a certain extent counterbalanced by his conservatism in matters affecting religion, and Freiherr von Patow (Finance) might be regarded as Liberal accessions. But, though a desire for reform began to show itself in the Government, the popular catchword of 'the Ministry of the New Era'

[1] Cf. Bernhardi, vol. III, pp. 323, 335; and see also Duke Ernest II, *Aus meinem Leben*, vol. II, pp. 390–4 and the Prince's letter, *ib.* It may be added that Max Duncker, a Liberal politician and historical scholar of much note (as to whom see Bernhardi *passim*, and the instructive article by H. von Petersdorff in *Allg. D. Biogr.* vol. XLVIII), though a Councillor in the Foreign Office, was specially attached to the service of the Prince of Hohenzollern.

had overleapt the situation. Still, the glamour of the change was not dissipated at once, and even reacted upon public life in other states, more especially in Bavaria, where apprehensions of a design against the constitution, the result of long-continued friction between von der Pfordten's Government and the Second Chamber, were now allayed by King Maximilian's declaration that he 'desired peace with his people,' and by the substitution for the unpopular anti-Prussian Minister of the less aggressive Freiherr Karl von Schrenck. In Prussia itself, the elections of 1858 attested the trust of the people in the 'New Era' and its blessings, although the Ministry had not yet had time to formulate its principles before fully showing its colours. Its chief legislative effort in the session of 1859, the restricted introduction of civil marriage, broke down, in consequence of the resistance with which it met in the *Herrenhaus*.

The relations between Prussia and Austria once more called for immediate attention, in view of the critical position in which the latter found herself placed. The question was whether, since her conduct in the Crimean War had entirely estranged Russia, Austria could count upon the support of Prussia in the conflict which the French Emperor's designs against her rule in Italy threatened to bring upon her. The marriage of Prince Frederick William with the Princess Royal (January 1858)[1] had, as we saw, in a measure improved the relations between Great Britain and Prussia; both Queen Victoria and the conservative British Government were friendly to Austria, and the King of Hanover fully shared this feeling in her favour. The Government of the Regent, although maintaining friendly terms with the other German Great Power, was at the same time conscious of the necessity of caution,

[1] His sister, Princess Louisa, had, in September 1856, married the new Grand-duke Frederick of Baden.

and repeatedly had resort to the advice of Bismarck, the watchful observer at Frankfort of Austria's proceedings. Late in 1858, as will be seen, Prussia determined the Federal Diet to energetic action towards Denmark, in whose dilatory proceedings Austria and the south-German Governments were prepared to acquiesce; and thus, towards the close of this year, the relations between the two Great Powers, though they remained friendly, could hardly be said to be those of cordial cooperation. On New Year's day, 1859, Napoleon III's memorable words to Freiherr von Hübner announced to an alarmed public the imminence of war between Austria and France.

Yet, if Austria, who at once massed 30,000 troops in Lombardy and speedily added further reinforcements, not only showed herself ready for war, but succeeded in obtaining the support of the Germanic Confederation, and with it that of Prussia, the French attack might still be warded off, or, peradventure, diverted from the frontier of Lombardy to the Rhine. Everything depended on the proffer of the requisite aid, and a ready ear was lent in the south-German Courts, and a loud response made in the south-German press. (The voices were but few that echoed the denunciation of Austria at any cost which Karl Vogt launched from Geneva.) In northern Germany the case was different: there was here much sympathy (though not as much as in England) among Liberals with the Italian aspirations for unity; and, in the minds of Prussian politicians who had forgotten neither Olmütz nor the scheme of a *Zollverein* reorganised in the Austrian interests, there simmered a natural desire for *revanche*. Moreover, at present the French Emperor's demands, which proposed to go no further than a reform of the condition of things in Italy on the basis of the Treaties of 1815, could not be called unreasonable. On the other hand, Austria rejected British attempts at mediation, and would have nothing to

say to a Conference. Schleinitz was opposed to any decided action; Bismarck was just at this time superseded at Frankfort by Usedom, a friend of Italian independence, and was himself appointed to Petersburg. When Archduke Albrecht came to Berlin to announce the intention of the Emperor of Austria to send an *ultimatum* to Sardinia, the Regent promised to support him in the event of any violation of the Treaties, but on the supposition that on the Austrian side everything had been done to preserve the peace. The Austrian *ultimatum* to Sardinia was, however, issued on April 17th, and Cavour's hopes were thus fulfilled that the adversary would take upon himself the responsibility of the actual outbreak of the war. The Prussian Government now (April 26th) issued a circular declaring that it would confine itself to protecting the Federal territory. But the French declaration of war against Austria (May 3rd) and Napoleon III's announcement that his object in drawing the sword was the liberation of Italy to the Adriatic, once more changed the situation. The Regent was now in favour of 'armed mediation' and, as a preliminary step, placed the Prussian army on the halfway footing called *Kriegsbereitschaft*. General (Adolf) von Willisen was sent on a special mission to Vienna, with instructions to ask that, in return for an undertaking by Prussia to aid in preserving to Austria her Italian dominions, Austria should either allow to Prussia the undivided command of the forces of the Germanic Confederation, or charge herself with covering the Upper Rhine and, in this case, assume the command over the south-German troops. But these alternatives were very coldly received at Vienna; and it was intimated, in return, that far more was expected from Prussia and the other members of the Confederation—above all, a guarantee of the treaties giving Austria protective rights over the Italian duchies; while it was further suggested that a joint effort should be made to overthrow the rule of Napoleon III—a design which

Willisen was well-advised in declining[1]. After the first serious Austrian reverse, however, these far-reaching schemes were abandoned, and the Prussian proposals accepted as the basis of further negotiation. Buol had retired from the Austrian Foreign Office, his place being taken by Count von Rechberg-Rothenlöwen. The Prussian Government, hereupon, declared itself ready to take steps for an armed intervention, and for such action as was imposed upon Prussia by her duties as a European Great Power and by the claims of Germany. On June 14th, the Regent ordered the mobilisation of six army corps (180,000 men), besides the formation of an army of observation consisting of two south-German army corps (60,000 men). But the Austrian Government was not contented with these steps and, even after Magenta had been fought and lost, sent a dispatch to Berlin reaffirming the obligation of Prussia to uphold the treaties that placed the Italian duchies under the protection of Austria, and reserving to her the right of free action at the Diet as to the command over the troops of the Confederation. The Regent now mobilised his whole army—a momentous step, as it proved, in view of the military reorganisation question which was soon to become so formidable to his Government. Communications were also opened with the neutral Great Powers as to the situation in Italy. On the same day (June 24th), however, the Austrians were routed at Solferino. Both the victor and the vanquished were weary of the struggle; and there can be no doubt as to the unwillingness of the latter, in particular, that the intervention of Prussia should now become a decisive element in the problem. The Austrian Government, in a word, could not face the prospect, should victory

[1] As to this proposal by Rechberg, see Biedermann, *Dreissig Jahre deutscher Geschichte*, vol. II, p. 228, where the authority cited is the pamphlet (by Aegidi), *Preussen und der Friede von Villafranca* (Berlin, 1859) (see *post*).

attend the German arms, of Prussia definitely securing the leadership in Germany. To the Prussian motion at Frankfort, that all the troops of the Confederation should be placed under the command of the Regent of Prussia, Austria moved an amendment proposing that, in accordance with the Federal Constitution, the Confederation should assert its supreme control by attaching Federal commissioners to headquarters. The phrase of Bernstorff's biographer[1], that Austria was 'trifling away' Prussia's help, seems hardly too strong; for, on the day after that of the presentation of this amendment, a truce was concluded in the theatre of war, and three days later the two Emperors at Villafranca agreed on the terms of peace (July 11th).

To this strange peace, which, by the sacrifice of Lombardy, failed to secure to Austria either the continuance of her control of the Italian duchies or the enduring possession of Venetia, Prussia had in no sense been a party. Her forces were moving towards the Rhine when its defence was no longer in question. But, though the peace had come suddenly, there had, even before its actual conclusion, been time for popular demonstrations, in central as well as in southern Germany, in favour of Prussian leadership in the defence of Austria. At Wiesbaden, a lengthy declaration was published by members of the Nassau Chambers, to the effect that Germany should not leave Austria undefended at the present crisis, and a similar utterance came, at the end of June, from the Württemberg Liberals at Stuttgart; but, in both cases, reference was also made to the necessity for the summons of a German parliament. It is true that, in both instances, the Prussian command of the Federal troops was contemplated for the duration of the War only, and that, in Bavaria at all events, doubts were expressed as to the willingness of the Prussian Government to give loyal

[1] *Bernstorff Papers*, vol. II, p. 76.

assistance to Austria and to repudiate all dealings with France. But Villafranca changed the situation. Austria had made her choice, and accepted the peace proposed by Napoleon rather than concede to Prussia a military command which might grow into a political hegemony. Were the hopes of those German patriots who regarded Prussian leadership as necessary for the attainment of national unity to be sacrificed in the process?

It was at this point that a new influence, which had for some time already been at work, but had not yet taken definite shape, began to assert itself in German politics. The endeavour of those who were the chief agents of that influence ultimately failed, or, rather, it was superseded by action of a different kind; but it is well that justice should not too soon have been done to the significance of the new movement in keeping alive the current of national feeling and in preparing a result which, without them, could hardly have been accepted as a national achievement.

The work of the German *Nationalverein* (National Association), though not accomplished, or even initiated, by a single individual, was largely carried out and inspired by the principles of a politician whose biographer has thus legitimately become its historian, and of his immediate associates[1]. Rudolf von Bennigsen, a Hanoverian noble of ancient family and landed estate, was distinguished by some of the characteristic features of his birth and station —above all, by the habit of personal ascendancy and perfect self-possession in dealing with men or bodies of men—including kings and parliaments. Unlike most of the prominent Hanoverian politicians, he was a native of the principality of Calenberg, the old conservative nucleus

[1] The latter half of vol. I of H. Oncken's *Rudolf von Bennigsen* constitutes an enduring tribute to the movement of which the subject of this invaluable political biography was the recognised leader.

of the kingdom, where lay Bennigsen, the estate of which, in course of time, he became the owner. But his father's appointment as Hanoverian Military Commissioner in Frankfort took the son out of the narrow environment of home. He early entered the official service of the kingdom (which was, practically, reserved for men of good family), but soon passed into its judicial branch, and, before settling down in life, abandoned the service altogether. He had speedily come to the conclusion that reform at home in Hanover was inseparable from German reform at large, herein differing from Stüve, the leader of the old Liberal party in the kingdom, who was a particularist at heart. But Bennigsen had, in these days, no wish for the annexation of Hanover to Prussia; what he advocated was the surrender to the latter of certain sovereign rights in return for inclusion in the new Germany under her leadership, and, as things stood, though this demand only gradually came into the foreground, the restriction of the relations between the Confederation proper and Austria to a league or wider alliance. With such views, Bennigsen entered upon active political life in 1855, when in Hanover the reactionary Government had settled itself in the saddle; and, by 1858, he had become the acknowledged head of the opposition against Borries. But, unlike the Prussian Liberals of the old school, he, from the first, identified himself with the popular aspirations for national unity and, in fact, had entered on his political career with this purpose, in confidential intercourse with a few intimate friends, and, more especially, with the eminent jurist Gottlieb Planck, and the Göttingen lawyer Johannes Miquel, whose powers in action the future was to display. Bennigsen's attacks upon Hanoverian misgovernment were explicitly directed against a reactionary system imposed by the Diet of the Confederation with the connivance of the Crown; and this naturally suggested to him and his friends the organisation

of a movement which should at once supplement and, as it were, include the struggle against the reaction in Hanover and other particular states, by setting up a programme of German national policy. This, as a matter of course, could only be done by means of an association—the sovereign method of which history had proved the efficiency in both state and Church[1].

The growth of the *Nationalverein* and its influence forms, perhaps, a more interesting chapter in the history of the German movement for national unity than either its later experiences or its own positive achievements. We may pass by the earlier efforts of Duke Ernest of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha, whose sympathy with Liberal ideas, though not unmixed with personal ambition and afterwards diverted into unprofitable courses[2], soon brought him into close

[1] The question on what model the German *Nationalverein* was actually formed is quite secondary. But it is tolerably obvious that this was, not so much the great Anti-Corn-Law League, which in England had recently carried to unexpected victory a great popular cause, but had done so without coming into conflict with the existing constitution, as the Italian *Società Nazionale*, founded in 1856 for the purpose of calling into life a national unity that still remained an ideal towards the realisation of which no practical steps had been taken. This must not, as it was in some quarters, be held to imply that Prussia was from the first intended to play the part of Sardinia. In 1861 King William I himself told the Emperor Napoleon, that he knew the *Nationalverein* to be desirous of tempting him to a policy like Victor Emmanuel's; but that this was contrary to his political principles (*Bernstorff Papers*, vol. II, p. 110). A sort of precedent had been set to the *Nationalverein* by the Catholic associations which, with their annual central assembly, had since 1848 been established in the interests of Rome, through the exertions, more especially, of Freiherr von Ketteler, afterwards Bishop of Mainz.

[2] Julius Fröbel, *Ein Lebenslauf*, vol. II, p. 73, attributes to the death of the Prince Consort (in December 1861) the disruption of the network of Coburg intrigue, of which the eventual elevation of his brother to the German throne was imagined to have formed part. As to Duke Ernest's share in the *Fürstentag* scheme of 1863

contact with the *Nationalverein*. They were encouraged by his confidential adviser Gustav Freytag, who, like the Duke, was devoted to the principle of German unity under Prussian headship, but who preferred to play his part with his pen or behind the scenes. A step forward was taken by the meeting of political economists at Gotha in 1858, which had the approval both of Bennigsen and of Schulze-Delitzsch, the pivot of the movement for the establishment of benefit societies and of other machinery for promoting association among the working-classes. The Gotha meeting tended signally, not only to rally Bennigsen and others to free-trade principles, but also to imbue them with a sense of the political importance of the *Zollverein*, and of the connexion between it and the development of German unity under Prussian leadership. These relations and possibilities were discussed at Gotha in a smaller meeting in which Bennigsen, Schulze-Delitzsch and the trustworthy Liberal leader Mathy took part.

So far matters had proceeded in this wholly preparatory stage, when the war of 1859 brought a very practical issue into play in the minds of those who had been considering the uses of the contemplated association for moulding political opinion for national ends. We have seen how, already during the Italian War, manifestations of a desire for the maintenance of a national conduct of affairs had occurred, and that, simultaneously, the time-honoured demand for a German parliament had been raised once more. But, after Villafranca, there was no longer any question of Prussian leadership on behalf of Austria; the danger now was that no change would be made in the

see below. His *mémoire* of 1853 on the foundation of an earlier *Verein* whose principles had much in common with the *Nationalverein* of 1859 is printed in *Aus meinem Leben*, etc., vol. II, pp. 532 ff. For a fine tribute to his generous patron the Duke, see Gustav Freytag, *Erinnerungen aus meinem Leben* (1899), p. 268.

conditions of the Confederation, and that another great war might find the problem of military leadership as much in abeyance as ever. It is a noteworthy fact that the earliest protest against such consequences came from a gathering of German democrats held at Eisenach, in the middle of July. It consisted chiefly of Thuringians, with the addition of a few Prussian politicians, among them Schulze-Delitzsch, upon whom the mantle of Waldeck had descended as leader of the advanced Liberals in the Prussian Chamber, and who deservedly exercised a great influence upon the working-classes as their true friend—outspoken, straightforward and practical. A vote was here passed insisting on the establishment of a permanent Central Authority for Germany, together with the convocation of a National Parliament; meanwhile, the leadership of the German forces and the diplomatic representation of her Government were to be placed in the hands of Prussia. Two days later, advantage was taken of a meeting of north-west-German advocates at Hanover to send an address of very similar purport to the Hanoverian Chamber. It was signed by Bennigsen, Miquel and some sevenhundred other names, chiefly from the new Hanoverian provinces. On July 27th, Bennigsen delivered, in the Second Chamber, his first great public speech. It was based on letters addressed by Bennigsen to L. K. Aegidi, one of the ablest publicists of the new Liberalism, and was afterwards, at the request of the Prussian Government, elaborated by him into the pamphlet entitled *Preussen und der Friede von Villafranca*, to which reference has been already made and which has been described[1] as a point-blank letter of refusal to Austria. A second Olmütz, Bennigsen declared in his speech—addressed to Germany rather than to his Hanoverian audience—was unthinkable.

About the same time (August, 1859), the citizens of

[1] By Duke Ernest II of Coburg.

Stettin addressed a petition in favour of a new German Central Authority to the Regent, whose reply was a very qualified assent, dwelling chiefly on the primary necessity of the reorganisation of the Prussian army, on which his mind was then intent; and a similar representation was sent by the town of Gotha to its Duke, whose response was all sympathy. Thus, when, on August 14th, a second meeting of Liberals, this time including both moderates and radicals, was held at Eisenach, the demand was reiterated for Prussian leadership in both military matters and diplomatic action, in the event of another direct menace to Germany from without. An appeal was, at the same time, made to all German patriots to cooperate in obtaining for Germany a satisfactory constitution. To this end, it was agreed to take advantage of the present gathering for the formation of a German national party; and a small committee, consisting of Bennigsen, Unruh[1] and two others, was appointed to take the necessary steps. These resolutions were made public, together with a commentary, apparently the work of the Darmstadt democrat August Metz, in which the hopes placed upon Prussia were, more circuitously than felicitously, expressed. In reply, Auerswald informed Unruh, through a *mémoire* by the indefatigable Max Duncker, that the Prussian Government, though without entering into any definite understanding as to particular measures, recognised the necessity of reforms and expressed its willingness to cooperate in them. On the strength of this rather vague Prussian promise, it was now resolved to proceed. On September 9th, countenanced by Duke

[1] Hans Victor von Unruh, a Liberal whose earlier career had ended with his being chosen President of the Prussian National Assembly in October 1848, had withdrawn from the Chamber on the imposition of the constitution of 1849. His *Erinnerungen*, edited by H. von Poschinger, describe his prominent share in the foundation of the *Nationalverein*.

Ernest, though Gustav Freytag and many of the Old Liberals still hesitated, Bennigsen, Schulze-Delitzsch, Unruh and a few others met at Coburg to discuss the organisation of the new national party and of the association which was to be its visible representative. At first, it had been intended to assemble at Frankfort, but the Duke's invitation was ultimately accepted; on the other hand, his wish for a more or less confidential body was, with Bennigsen's concurrence, rejected, and in its place Schulze-Delitzsch's plan of an open and comprehensive cooperation on a democratic basis was approved.

It was not to be expected that the Austrian Government should acquiesce in these proceedings, or in the offer volunteered by Duke Ernest in reply to an address from the citizens of Gotha, of resigning, in the interests of Germany at large, certain of his sovereign rights. Count von Rechberg was, indeed, less inclined than his predecessor Buol had been to enter into a direct contest with Prussia on the subject of Federal reform. While during the last four years Austrian envoy at the Diet, he had, on the whole, remained on good terms with Prussia's high-spirited representative at Frankfort, and would have preferred dealing directly with Prussia to courting the goodwill of the secondary states. He could not, however, approve of the design of the *Nationalverein*, and addressed what was almost a reprimand to Duke Ernest. But the ball had now been set rolling. On September 15th and 16th, a meeting was held at Frankfort (immediately after the second assembly of the Economic Congress) for the purpose of arriving at a conclusion with the representatives of southern Germany, who formed a considerable proportion of the 150 delegates in attendance from all parts of Germany. This meeting was the real constituent assembly of the new national party and of the *Nationalverein* which was to be its representative body, and of which Bennigsen

was chosen first President. It formulated its statutes, declaring its object to be the union and free development of the entire fatherland, no mention being for the present made of either the inclusion or the exclusion of Austria, and nothing being laid down distinctly as to Prussian leadership. Bennigsen was also named chairman of a Committee of twelve, charged with conducting the affairs of the association. But public feeling in the south-west of Germany was by no means generally in accord with the principles which had been primarily laid down by Bennigsen and his friends, although among those who shared them was the Württemberger A. L. Reysscher, an active member of the Committee; and, at a meeting held at Göppingen (December 18th), it was agreed, by an overwhelming majority, not to recommend the extension of the *Nationalverein* to Württemberg; while in Bavaria, where K. Brater acted as corresponding member, and in the remainder of the south-west the same opinion prevailed. At Frankfort, the Senate declined to permit the association to fix its domicile there, and, in accordance with the invitation of Duke Ernest, it was established at Coburg.

These signs of hesitancy, no doubt, weakened the position of the *Nationalverein* in its early days and, together with the Prince-regent's distrust, made the Prussian Government slow to enter into declared cooperation with it; but it, nevertheless, gradually extended its ramifications over northern and central Germany, and attracted support even in the south-west. Great discretion as well as energy was, throughout, displayed by the president Bennigsen, whose most distinctive characteristic as a politician was his rooted belief in the necessity of acting through the people as well as for the people, and who thus, notwithstanding the difference in their personal antecedents, stood nearer to his most important associate Schulze-

Delitzsch than was perhaps at times supposed. Yet he was very far from being a *Realpolitiker* in the sense of ignoring principle, and had prepared himself by a close theoretical study of political science for the public career on which he seemed suddenly to have entered. He and his immediate followers, in the words of his biographer, regarded themselves as the heirs of the old Frankfort party which had consistently contended for the establishment of a hereditary empire (*Reichspartei*). Death, together with old age and weariness of a struggle which had to be carried on under new conditions, was thinning the ranks of the old members of this party as well as of the Liberals of the earlier school at large. Dahlmann, from whose historical writings as well as from his political services the friends of constitutional freedom had long derived inspiration, passed away in December 1860; and Heinrich von Gagern, once the honoured President of the National Assembly, with the history of whose patriotic endeavours his name is more largely associated than any other, was about to end his public career as Hesse-Darmstadt *chargé d'affaires* at Vienna, having for some time become virtually an adherent of the *grossdeutsch* party[1]. Mathy, who was no *doctrinaire*, could not bring himself to recede from the broader and more comprehensive demands of the *Reichsverfassung* days; on the other hand, the historians Gervinus, Häusser and Droysen were, in accordance with the ways of their generation if not of their profession, unable to reconcile themselves to the acceptance of new programmes of action, or of new leaders. Yet others, such as Gustav Freytag, preferred, as has been seen, to remain, more or less, behind the scenes and in the personal confidence of the ducal 'protector' of the association. Of the younger generation of Liberals, however, there were few who did not stand in a direct personal relation towards it. Of Unruh and Miquel mention

[1] He died, half-forgotten, in 1880.

has already been made; among later leaders were two early luminaries of the new *Fortschritt* party, Max von Forckenbeck, an Elbing advocate of aspiring mind, and the West-Prussian Freiherr Leopold von Hoverbeck. Men of eminence in the academic as well as in the commercial world gave to the association the prestige of their support—among them Mommsen and Virchow, the banker Adalbert Delbrück and the publisher Franz Duncker. For the rest, the operations of the *Nationalverein* were not conducted on precisely the same party lines in its several spheres of activity. At Bremen, for instance, sincere support was accorded, but tempered with the conservative and practical tendencies of this important commercial city. In Hesse-Cassel, F. Oetker, the leading spirit of the struggle against Hassenpflug, was unable to become a member of the committee of the association, but was, throughout, one of its most trusted advisers. The conduct of the business of the association was, for some time, in the busy, indeed over-busy, hands of F. Streit; but, after it had become necessary to move this part of its work to Frankfort, it was committed to L. Nagel, an indefatigable worker and at the same time an idealist and religious thinker. The foremost publicist of the association was the editor of its weekly journal, the Brunswicker, A. L. von Rochau, who as editor of the *Constitutionelle Zeitung* had been expelled from Berlin under the Manteuffel Ministry, but who is better known as a patriotic historian of merit—a more famous historian and publicist, Treitschke, described him as 'one of the proudest Germans' whom he had ever met. In general, nothing distinguished the work of the *Nationalverein* more notably than the abundance of literary as well as journalistic talent employed in its service—an abundance unsurpassed by any analogous efforts in the course of German history, from the days of Luther and Hutten onwards[1].

[1] It may be added that the *Nationalverein* reached the maximum

How could the contributory efforts of the German national party and of the association representing it be most speedily and directly brought to bear upon the existing situation, so as to strengthen and consolidate the endeavour to bring about national unity under Prussian, as the only possible effective, leadership? The old problems which had long occupied the attention of the Confederate Governments and their subjects still remained open; and the secondary states continued as unwilling as ever to solve them by a free acceptance of the position which must be conceded to Prussia in the settlement. In November 1859, the Saxon Minister Beust had united the plenipotentiaries of Bavaria, Saxony, Württemberg, Mecklenburg-Schwerin, Nassau, Saxe-Meiningen and Saxe-Altenburg in conferences held at Würzburg (whence the designation of 'the Würzburgers[1]') for the purpose of an agreement as to Federal reform, and, more especially, in opposition to the idea of a simple partition of the military command of the Confederate troops between Prussia and Austria in the event of a Federal war. In 1860, after the foundation of the *Nationalverein*, the same ingenious statesman devised a project of his own which was to counteract the designs of that Association[2]. This was essentially a makeshift, it being proposed to leave at Frankfort only the members

number of members (over 25,000) in October 1862, but after 1864 failed to maintain anything like the same total. University students, though their goodwill was courted, were not admitted as members. Contingents were furnished by foreign countries, even by the United States, till the outbreak of the Civil War (1861). The *Nationalverein* wisely abstained from connecting itself in any way with religious propaganda, though ultramontane influences seem to have been very persistently exerted against it.

[1] The conference at the same city in February 1864 was attended by representatives of nearly all the above-named Governments, with, however, the addition of a *kleindeutsch* minority.

[2] See chapter XVIII of vol. I of his *Memoirs* (Engl. tr., 1887).

of the Federal Administration, while providing for half-yearly meetings of the Federal Diet, one at Ratisbon and one at Hamburg, over which Austria and Prussia were, respectively, to preside, while a representative assembly of deputies from the several German diets was to be summoned from time to time. Like other projects of the same inventive brain, this fell stillborn to the ground. Meanwhile, the feeling had grown among the members of the *Nationalverein* that nothing but a question of foreign policy—that is to say, one calling into play the interests or, better still, the sentiments, of the whole nation as against foreign oppression, insult or menace—could give the necessary force and vitality to the national aspirations for union. The feeling was well-warranted, and derived support from the experience of other nations besides the German; nor can there be any doubt that it was justified by the ultimate event. But, at the time now in question—the earlier part of the year 1860—the attempt to find such an opportunity in the action of France in the new phase of the Italian question was not very well chosen, and certainly premature. The annexation of Savoy and Nice by France (March 1860), which had been openly censured by the British Government, though without being made a *casus belli*, had caused much immediate uneasiness in Switzerland. The menace to the Rhine and Belgium was more remote; but in Liberal circles apprehensions were entertained, especially as there was little confidence in Schleinitz's management of foreign affairs, that Bismarck, whose appointment as his successor could not be far distant, had been moving in the direction of a bargain with France. Bennigsen, in a speech made at Berlin about this time, significantly referred to the fears called forth by Napoleon III's demand for a revision of the present frontiers of France[1]. But, before long, it became

[1] See Oncken, *R. von Bennigsen*, vol. I, p. 370.

apparent that no adequate result was likely to follow from pressing these fears upon the German public. Bismarck, though there had been no tampering on his part with the integrity of Germany and the preservation of her frontiers, was of opinion that Napoleon III's present utterance, even taken together with his recent action, was not a fit occasion for throwing down the gauntlet to his ambition, or, as many southern Germans wished, for seeking to thwart the progress of Italy towards unity. Napoleon III himself, on the other hand, thought it worth his while to seek to calm the apprehensions which he had excited in Germany by inducing the Regent to receive a visit from him during his summer sojourn at Baden. The sovereigns of the principal German states (except, of course, Austria), who, more or less fortuitously, took part in the meeting (June 1860), were anxious that nothing should pass between the French Emperor and the Regent without their observation, and that they should then confront the latter with their views as to the affairs of Germany at large[1]. So far as the French Emperor was concerned, though his interviews with the German sovereigns at Baden proceeded pleasantly and he even managed to gain the goodwill of the King of Hanover by his personal courtesies, he failed to inspire much confidence in the German Powers or to induce them to put faith in his assurances, as conveyed to them by the Regent, that he was not responsible for the course of events in Italy since the peace, and that he was far from cherishing further projects of annexation, by means of an arrangement with Prussia or otherwise[2]. Just before the Emperor's departure from Baden,

[1] See Duke Ernest of Coburg's account, given to Bernhardi, of the Baden meeting, *Aus dem Leben*, etc., vol. IV, pp. 19 ff.; and cf. the narrative, in the Duke's *Memoirs*, vol. III, pp. 14 ff.

[2] In the transactions after the Emperor's departure, the Grand-dukes of Baden and Weimar, with Duke Ernest himself, acted on a common understanding; and this was confidentially

King Maximilian of Bavaria summoned a conference between those German sovereigns (the 'Würzburgers') who had hitherto been adverse to the Prussian proposals for German reform, including the plan of excluding Austria from the Confederation proper; but they were unable to reach any conclusions on this head, and, by common consent, turned rather to the subject of the *Nationalverein*, which about this time was doing everything in its power to popularise its purpose by the formation of *Wehrvereine* of all sorts, Schleswig-Holstein demonstrations and the like. Among the Governments there was no division of opinion as to this activity; and they had already endeavoured to prevent the spread of the association in their own states, so far as this was in their power. In Bennigsen's own native land—Hanover—the indignation of the King and Borries against schemes which involved the Prussian headship of Germany knew no bounds[1]; and, from Heidelberg, the *Nationalverein* hurled back defiance at the head of the reactionary Ministers, who threatened all officials who should join the association with official punishment, and all tradesmen guilty of the same offence with a kind of official boycott. The Government of Electoral Hesse threatened any of its subjects who became members of the *Verein* with penal proceedings. Other police measures were taken in Saxony, where Beust opened the sluices of official indignation in Mecklenburg and in Württemberg. Yet, notwithstanding this display of fury, the Regent of Prussia at Baden refused to enter into any discussion of the subject there. In a conversation which he shortly afterwards held with King

communicated to the Prussian Prime-minister, Prince Anton of Hohenzollern, who was in attendance on the Prince-regent.

[1] Borries's chief publicistic champion was Oskar Meding, author of the virulent *Open Letter to Bennigsen* (Hanover, 1860), and well-known under the pseudonym of Gregor Samarow as a political novelist.

Maximilian II of Bavaria at Munich, he sought to quiet the apprehensions of his host as to the *Nationalverein*, while announcing his own resolution to carry on a moderate constitutional government. At the same time, he declined to recede from the Prussian demands as to the military command—in case of war—which Prussia and Austria must hold north and south of the river Main respectively, without any question of a third claimant. On these lines, he was ready to come to an understanding with Austria, if, after sacrificing a province rather than allowing to Prussia the credit of overcoming a foreign foe, she would no longer maintain an attitude of unfriendliness. At the end of July, an interview, accordingly, took place at Teplitz between the Emperor Francis Joseph and the Regent of Prussia; where, however, the former proved unyielding on the question of the presidency of the Diet, while, as to the military command, he would not go beyond consenting to a military conference on the subject. No guarantee for Venetia was, accordingly, forthcoming; and a meeting of the Emperor of Austria and the Regent of Prussia with Tsar Alexander II, which followed in October, likewise led to no very definite result. When the Emperor Napoleon pressed for a European Conference, neither of the two German Great Powers was willing to accept it—Austria declining quite decisively. Something—but not much—had thus been done to bring about a better understanding between them. The *Nationalverein*, at its meeting held at Coburg in the previous September, had dealt cautiously with contentious points, but had adhered steadfastly to the main principles of the national party—the establishment of a Federal state under Prussian leadership, with the convocation of a national parliament. With this programme, which was *kleindeutsch* in effect if not in profession, and against which, as we shall see, operations were soon to be set on foot at Vienna from the *grossdeutsch* point of view, the national party represented

by the *Nationalverein* had now to meet the new difficulties arising from the momentous constitutional conflict which was at hand in Prussia.

It is necessary to go back a little, in order to explain the political troubles in the Prussian monarchy itself, which were now beginning to interfere seriously with the hopes placed upon the leadership of Prussia in Germany—so much so as to discourage the national party that had steadfastly cherished these hopes, and to cause Austria to take fresh steps for maintaining her traditional primacy among the Confederate states. The 'New Era,' which had been hailed as opening with the regency, had, hitherto, proved a disappointment to the Liberals; and, although the more glaring abuses of the reactionary system had come to an end with Westphalen's administration of home affairs, even Schwerin had not made the expected clean sweep, especially in the matter of provincial Governments. Nor had the *Herrenhaus* been awed into the acceptance of the two chief Liberal reforms to which it had been invited—the legalisation of civil marriage and the equalisation of the land-tax[1]. The policy of the Crown with regard to the Italian War, though prudent, could not be popular; for it had involved considerable expenditure, met partly by a loan and partly by additional taxation, without leading to any result. First, it was clear, from the Regent's reply to the Stettin address, that the Government had not made up its mind to an active policy in German affairs such as was desired by the national party. Expectancy was giving way to disillusionment, and the 'New Era' seemed too like the old to deserve to be called by a name of so much promise.

[1] The Duke of Coburg (vol. III, p. 25) pointedly observes that in 1860 the *Herrenhaus* rejected two Government land-tax bills, 'on which the financial system of the reorganisation of the army was based.' Cf. Bernhardi, vol. III, p. 330.

The Regent, however, was intent upon other things than the accomplishment of German unity under Prussian leadership: or, rather, he had resolved upon a course of action of which the order of sequence had long seemed to him imperative. This conviction had been brought home to him, in the most direct way possible, by the experience of the Hesse-Cassel crisis of 1850, followed by that of Olmütz, when the Prussian Government had in the end shrunk from risking war. Moreover, even at an earlier date, the Baden campaign had furnished him with an opportunity of noting the defects of the present regimental system in the field. Thus the reorganisation of the Prussian army, which, in its present condition, the most competent authorities held to be inadequate to the demands that might, at any time, be suddenly made upon it, had come to be very near to the heart and mind of the Prince of Prussia; and, if his accomplishment of this task be regarded as the historic foundation of the new German empire, he has a just claim to be called its founder, in substance as well as in outward seeming.

Not less unmistakably, the intellectual author of the great military reform, which, in its ultimate consequences, was to secure to Prussia the leadership of Germany, and to make the new German empire the foremost military Power of the modern world, was Albrecht, afterwards Field-marshal Count, von Roon. No other military change of the kind—neither the setting-up of Cromwell's New Model, nor the transformation of the French army of the Bourbons into the Revolutionary army of 1792 and the following years (if these may be brought into comparison here)—is so directly and so completely traceable to the insight and persistence of individual administrative genius. For it is as an administrator, in both the conception and the execution of his design, that Roon rendered the services which were to secure to his name a place by the side of those of Bismarck

and Moltke[1]. For the sake of these services, he sacrificed the prospect of military glory proper; as for party, and especially parliamentary, politics, he cared for them only in so far as his official responsibilities forced him to take part in the struggle which filled the critical years of his earlier Ministerial life. Yet such were his unyielding sense of duty and his ability to rise to the performance of it, that he not merely became the chief, and for a time the one prominent, champion of the proposed military reform, but a speaker and debater of remarkable power. It was a matter of indifference to him that he was hated even worse than Bismarck, who at last came to the rescue of the King and of his Minister of War—for Roon's public deliverances were devoid of the humour which in Bismarck even his adversaries at times found it difficult to resist.

The force which lies in lucidity has never been shown more clearly than it is in the memorable preliminary statement which, in consequence of a previous conversation with the Regent (whose personal confidence he enjoyed from an early date[2]), Roon drew up and presented to him on July 22nd, 1858[3]. After a few opening words as to the

[1] Their literary monument is to be found in the *Denkwürdigkeiten* by his son, Count Waldemar von Roon (3 vols., 4th ed., 1897). This edition contains, besides letters to and from Bismarck, Roon's almost equally interesting correspondence with his independent-minded friend Clemens Theodor Perthes, published separately (in 1896) for the years 1864–7.

[2] After acting as Military Governor to Prince Frederick Charles at Bonn, Roon had served as Chief of the General Staff at Coblenz during the residence there of the Prince of Prussia (1848–50), who would fain have persuaded him to become Governor of his eldest son, the future Emperor Frederick III. Roon, who began his career as instructor in geography at the Berlin *Cadettenhaus*, was one of those soldier-teachers to whom the Prussian army had owed so much, and whose place in its system he was continually striving to advance.

[3] It is commented on in vol. I, and printed in full as an appendix to vol. II, of the *Denkwürdigkeiten*.

significance of its military strength to a country where, as in Prussia, even industrialism incarnate does not venture to join in 'Elihu hymns[1],' he enters at once into his subject—the defects of the present Prussian military organisation. He declares the *Landwehr*, supposed to represent a people in arms, to have been a makeshift, which served its original purpose, but which, as a permanent force, is a militia comparing with a standing army as a Sunday compares with a week-day school. The *Landwehr*—or part of it—must, therefore, be blended with the line according to a plan which will ensure the greater efficiency, while at the same time increasing the numerical total, of the officers, non-commissioned officers, and rank and file of the standing army. The plan proposed to this end was, substantially, that on which, as will be seen immediately, the Prussian army was actually reorganised two years after the presentation of this preliminary memorial. The Prince of Prussia, in later years, repeatedly recalled to its author the beginnings of the plan, without which the ensuing great political changes would have been impossible.

The actual evolution of the great design into legislative proposals can only be traced here in broadest outline. After the Prince had assumed the regency and changed his Ministry, in October 1858, he lost no time in examining Roon's plan and calling upon General von Bonin, the Minister of War, for his report. The Commission on the subject appointed by the Regent early in January 1859, was, however, deferred, largely because of the hesitations of Bonin, and then in consequence of the political

[1] The allusion is of course to Elihu Burritt, the editor of *The Herald of Peace*, upon whose efforts it is impossible to look back without sympathy. In 1850, speaking of the recent peace congresses, Radowitz paid a tribute to their originator, declaring him to be, '*per se*, no fool.' (See Meinecke, *Radowitz u. die deutsche Revolution* (1913), pp. 372–3.)

complications which led to the mobilisation of the Prussian army. But this mobilisation had, more clearly than anything else could have done, demonstrated the insufficiency of the existing military system; and the demobilisation which speedily followed offered the most obvious of opportunities for carrying out the most essential of the changes proposed. The discussion of the plan was, therefore, now seriously taken up; the Commission met on October 31st, and finished its work in a few days; when Bonin, although he approved in substance of the plan as now matured, recommended reductions which would have diminished its cost and thus have made it more palatable to the diet and the country. It was thought at the time that the *Junker* party had sought to raise this cost and thus to cause a dispute between the Regent (who would abate nothing) and his Ministers[1]; in any case, the end was Bonin's resignation and the appointment in his stead of Roon as Minister of War (December 5th, 1859). In the speech from the throne with which the Regent opened the diet (January 12th, 1860) he announced the intention of the Crown to submit the project of a law on general military service, accompanied by the requisite financial proposals; adding, in words of the deepest solemnity, that no measure of so much importance for the defence and for the greatness of the fatherland had ever been proposed to its representatives[2].

As to the scheme now brought forward, the following summary must suffice. The Prussian military system, which it was now definitely proposed to recast, was based on the famous law of September 3rd, 1814. This law had

[1] As to Bonin's resignation and appointment to Coblenz, see Meinecke, pp. 295–7.

[2] In private, he spoke passionately on the subject, and, early in 1860, he let it be known that, if the proposals were not carried, he would resign the regency. Bernhardi, vol. III, p. 293.

fixed the period of general service under arms at three years in the line, with a further two years in the reserve, followed by a further seven years in the first, and by yet another seven years in the second, ban of the *Landwehr*[1]. In war-time, the line and the reserve (men of 20 to 25) and the *Landwehr* of the first ban (men of 25 to 32) constituted the field-army, while of the second ban were formed the garrisons of the fortresses. In 1814, the annual levy of the recruits in the Prussian monarchy was reckoned at about 38,000 out of a total population of between ten and eleven millions. This population had, by the year 1860, risen to nearly eighteen millions, so that the annual number of those primarily liable to military service was now not far short of 65,000. But, as a matter of fact, the total of the annual levies remained nearly stationary: in other words, more than 25,000 young fellows annually remained exempt from what was still, in theory, 'universal service.' Moreover, the most recent mobilisations had proved that of the first ban of the *Landwehr* more than half were married men, a large proportion of them with families, who were impeded by their military obligations in performing the ordinary duties of civil life; and its ranks were further thinned by death, physical deterioration and emigration. An increase in the numbers of the line was therefore requisite in the first instance; and this it was proposed to effect by a process sure to raise the standard of the whole military force, which was of even greater importance.

In conformity with Roon's original design, but in certain respects modifying or extending it, the Government now proposed a plan which, while abolishing the *Landwehr* neither in fact nor in name, incorporated part of it with

[1] The *Landsturm*, consisting of men up to 45 years of age, who had passed through army, reserve and *Landwehr*, need not be noticed here.

the line in the following fashion[1]. The period of service in the reserve was to be prolonged from two to four years, which would make a total service in the line of seven years: on the other hand, the period of service in the *Landwehr* was to be proportionately curtailed, and no use was to be made in future in the first line of any part of the *Landwehr*. This would necessitate the formation of a large number of new regiments (nearly double the existing number), while the peace-strength of the new battalions and of the old was to be to some extent restored. Thus, it was calculated that, while the peace-strength of the army, *without* the *Landwehr*, would amount to about 440,000 men, short only by 40,000 of the total it had reached under the old system, it would henceforth, with the *Landwehr*, be increased by between 200,000 and 300,000, while the efficiency of the first line would be augmented in a measure of which no doubt could exist. The basis of the whole plan was the definite restoration of the three years' service imposed by the law of 1814, but provisionally reduced by a cabinet order (of September 24th, 1833) to a service of two years, which in 1852 and 1856 it had been found necessary to raise again to two-and-a-half and to three years respectively[2]. The annual cost of carrying out these reforms was estimated at 9½ million dollars (£1,425,000).

After what were in fact two bills—one for the revision of the law as to military service, the other for the provision of the necessary supply—had been laid before the diet, a Committee was at once appointed to report on them. The

[1] What follows applies to the infantry. Differences in the case of other arms, and in that of the Guards, must be pretermitted here.

[2] For an account of these proposals, see Roon's *Denkwürdigkeiten* (vol. II, pp. 3 f.) and cf. the statement in Sybel (vol. II, bk. VII, c. IV), who was himself a combatant in the 'conflict.' See also Oncken, *Das Zeitalter Wilhelms I* (1888), bk. IV, c. I, and the figures in Egelhaaf *Bismarck*, pp. 64–6.

chairman of the Committee was Vincke, whose name stood for the cause of constitutional freedom; the reporter was General Stavenhagen, who had joined the Liberal party but who, naturally enough for a veteran of Ligny and Namur, was a conservative in military matters. Persisting, from motives which it is unnecessary to analyse, in treating the question from a political point of view, the Committee (by majorities of 13 to 7 and 14 to 6 respectively) rejected the three years' service and the amalgamation of part of the *Landwehr* with the line. There could be no doubt as to the Chamber following suit, and the Government now arrived at the conclusion that it would suffice for their object to propose an addition of nine million dollars to the expenditure authorised in the ordinary budget for the period from May 1st, 1860, to June 30th, 1861, in order to maintain and complete the measures taken for the increased efficiency of the army. On May 5th, a royal cabinet order directed the substitution, for 36 regiments of *Landwehr*[1] infantry, of the same number of 'combined infantry regiments.' On the 13th, the Minister of Finance, Reichsfreiherr von Patow, asked for a grant of nine millions. In committee, he had explained that the grant would only be asked provisionally; but he now explained that by 'provisionally' he had meant 'till after a second definitive discussion.' The Chamber, however, in voting the sum asked, ignored this explanation and insisted on introducing into the vote the unambiguous word *einstweilig* (temporary); while the words with which on May 23rd the Regent closed the session of the diet, and still more his order for the actual formation, in the following July, of the new regiments with their *cadres*, made it manifest that he and his Government accepted 'temporary' or 'provisional' in the sense of 'definitive' or 'permanent.' Thus each side came to be

[1] The application of the same procedure to the *Landwehr* cavalry was to follow.

held chargeable by the other with illfaith; and hence the bitter and, for a long time, utterly irreconcilable character of the quarrel between Crown and Chamber which ensued. In two supplementary elections held in the autumn of 1860, the democratic leaders Waldeck and Schulze-Delitzsch were chosen members of the Chamber; with the reopening of the diet in January 1861 a violent stage of the conflict must set in.

The death of the unhappy King Frederick William IV on January 2nd, 1861, and the accession of King William I to the throne, only deepened the gravity of the situation. In his speech from the throne on the 14th, the new sovereign treated the reorganisation of the army as an accomplished fact; and it soon appeared that, with regard to the foreign and the German policy of the Ministry, the Liberal party, which had hitherto hopefully supported them, favoured a more resolute course than they seemed disposed to adopt. Vincke carried a resolution declaring it to be against the interest of Prussia to oppose the consolidation of Italy; and, while the King was thanked for his endeavours to improve the military constitution of the Confederation, he was urged to take the steps necessary for bringing about such changes as would satisfy at once the needs of Germany and the just claims of Prussia.

The story of the struggle that was now carried on, and that may be said to have, till the appointment of Bismarck to the chief conduct of affairs, partaken of the nature of a Ministerial crisis, as well as of a parliamentary struggle, cannot be here told at length, more especially as regard must be had to its connexion with that of the general German question and the policy in this respect of Austria and Prussia. So far as the home quarrel with the Chamber was concerned, it was on the part of the Government conducted mainly by Roon, in circumstances of the utmost difficulty, and even of distress. It is true that the King was not only thoroughly loyal to what he had recognised as

his duty, and that, in the present case, he perfectly knew his own mind. Already, in the early summer of 1860, he had thought of resigning the regency; and, in the early summer of 1861, the Ministerial pressure put upon him brought him almost to the brink of despair[1]. He had no full confidence in any of his Ministers with the exception of his Minister of War; and he continued, to the last, unwilling to summon to his and Roon's aid the one politician to whom the latter persistently urged him to have resort, and for whom the King seems at the time to have entertained a feeling compounded of admiration and dread. Of Roon's colleagues, the majority were for holding on; but some were preparing to go. On the other hand, he had the nvaluable departmental support of General (afterwards Field-marshal) Edwin von Manteuffel as Chief of the Military Cabinet, of General von Peucker as Inspector-general, and of General Helmuth von Moltke as Chief of the Staff.

In the session of 1861, the King's hesitation to approve of the constitutional reforms pressed upon the Crown by the Liberals and by the Liberal members of the Ministry—of which the demand for Ministerial responsibility was the sum and substance—seemed a fresh argument against the increased expenditure inseparable from the reorganisation of the army. Though only the most advanced section of the Liberals, under Waldeck's leadership, urged the omission from the budget of any additional grant to meet the cost of the newly-formed regiments, the majority of the Chamber was in favour of maintaining these, but at the same time demanded legislation which should definitely establish the principles of the two years' service and of a retention of the *Landwehr* as part of the army in the field. The arguments

[1] See Roon's *Denkwürdigkeiten*, vol. II, p. 43. Cf. *ib.*, p. 21, as to the trouble caused to the King by General von Manteuffel's duel with the Liberal deputy K. von Twesten; and see below as to his intention of abdicating in September 1862.

by which this demand, adverse as it was to the very bases of the King's and Roon's reforms, was supported must be passed by here. The practical result was that, by a small majority, the Chamber, after making certain reductions, voted the requisite additional expenditure for 1861, but granted it as extraordinary expenditure only; while at the same time the Government was called upon to produce in the next diet a bill laying down finally the future conditions of military service. The diet was closed on June 5th, and the elections which followed made it abundantly clear that, so far as public opinion went, the new was to be followed by a newest era.

The conflict between Crown and Chamber in Prussia had not yet reached its full height; but its progress had already proved a most serious obstacle to the design of those who consistently adhered to the idea of a Prussian leadership of a united Germany. The *Grossdeutschen*, in accordance with the fundamental principle of their existence as a party[1] which had never ceased to oppose the scheme of excluding Austria from the closer Confederation, had, as will be seen below, begun to revive their manœuvres more hopefully than before; while divers reactionary Governments did everything in their power to repress the *Nationalverein*, and King George V of Hanover even dreamt of turning the tables upon Prussia by excluding her from the Confederation. There was a more or less vague design, in which the able publicist Hermann Orges, of the *Augsburg Allgemeine Zeitung*, interested himself, of founding a universal Germanic league which should, as it were, swallow up the *Nationalverein*; and even the ambitious patron and protector of that association, Duke Ernest of Coburg, began to give sideglances towards *Grossdeutschtum*, and to weigh the advice of the sagacious patriarch of his House, King Leopold I, not to insist too strongly upon

[1] Cf. vol. I, p. 484, note.

Prussian leadership. In June 1861, the much-travelled Julius Fröbel, who thirteen years earlier had only escaped his companion Robert Blum's fate at Vienna through the prescient lenity of Windischgrätz, drew up at Kissingen the memorandum as to the ends and action of the *Gross-deutschen* which he states to have been the *fons et origo* of their grand movement, and which was to make him for a time the *confidant* of Rechberg, Schmerling and Biegeleben[1]. The military conferences hereupon held at Teplitz by order of the Governments of the two Great Powers, which lasted till April 1861, came to nothing; as did the discussions on the organisation of German coast defence, in the course of which Hanover, aiming at a separate North-sea system under her own direction, was supported by Austria in frustrating the scheme of a flotilla of gunboats under supreme Prussian control[2].

Such were some of the factors of the situation which in the Prussian elections of 1861 led to the conjunction of Prussian Liberalism with the aspirations of the *National-verein*, and to the manifesto sent forth, about midsummer, by the new parliamentary party which had begun to form itself and was to be known as the *Fortschritt*. The *National-verein*, which met, in August, at Heidelberg—in the one German state beside Coburg-Gotha where the Government (under Grand-duke Frederick's new Minister Freiherr Franz von Roggenbach) had openly testified to its acceptance of Prussian leadership—did its best to second the declarations of its Prussian allies. Throughout the lesser states, in central and south-western Germany in particular, the

[1] See the earlier half, *passim*, of vol. II, of the *Lebenslauf* of this extremely able and well-informed politician and publicist, whose criticisms of others are rarely wanting in point, while his *apologia* for his own inconsistencies is never of the repentant sort.

[2] There was much difference on the subject, even at Bremen. See Oncken, *Bennigsen*, vol. I, pp. 565 ff.

movement for German unity, and for united action in the Schleswig-Holstein and Hesse-Cassel difficulties, was actively carried on—under cover of endless gatherings of deputies, lawyers, merchants and so forth, and, in wider spheres, of the rifle-clubs (*Schützenvereine*) which largely took the place of the gymnastic associations (*Turnvereine*), formerly of evil odour in the nostrils of authority.

Meanwhile, the attitude of the King, fortified by the determined advice of Roon, was stiffening in face of the popular current. Notwithstanding his occasional misgivings and the deliberate movement of his mind, he was of too brave a heart to be influenced by the attempt at assassination to which he was subjected at Baden (July 14th, 1861); but he was vexed by the hesitation of his Ministers to further his wish that the traditional ceremony of hereditary homage (*Erbhuldigung*) should be observed in his case as it had in his brother's before him. As usual, however, his good sense prevailed, and his solemn coronation (by his own hand), which took place at Königsberg on October 18th, sufficed[1]. Shortly before his coronation, he had paid a return visit to Compiègne, and received friendly and pacific assurances from the Emperor.

Meanwhile, the Ministry still held on, though in the Foreign Office a change had been made towards the end of this summer. Bismarck's time had not yet come, and Count Bernstorff took the place of Schleinitz, who became Minister of the Household. Bernstorff, whose northern solidity and loyalty of mind made him one of the trustworthiest as well as the most valued servants of the King, was at this time essentially in agreement with Bismarck as to the ultimate objects of Prussian policy, and had, in a note for the King's eye, firmly laid down the course which, at the time of his taking over the conduct of foreign affairs, he thought should

[1] Bismarck strongly approved of waiving the homage ceremony.

be pursued at home and abroad[1]. But he was a diplomat and not a parliamentary statesman, and his own preference was for his London post. Towards Austria he was desirous of pursuing a clear but conciliatory policy, and Rechberg seemed willing to meet him halfway. But, though this resulted, as has been already seen, in Austria's agreeing with Prussia both as to the treatment of that Hesse-Cassel difficulty which, but a few years before, had all but involved the two Powers in war, and as to their joint action in the new phase of the Schleswig-Holstein question, the policy of Austria at this time was without the consistency which springs from sincerity.

The internal difficulties of the Austrian Government since Schwarzenberg's death (April 3rd, 1852) had, indeed, been enormous, and such as were only too likely to engender in the sovereign, upon whom the making and unmaking of Ministers, in the last resort, depended, a dangerous opportunism. After Schwarzenberg had passed away, the reorganisation of the Austrian monarchy had been carried on, in the spirit of absolutist centralisation which had animated that haughtiest of statesmen, by Bach, the leader among his lieutenants—if lieutenant he could be called—and by a body of hardworking Ministers. Schmerling, who had a policy, and a past, of his own, had quitted the Ministry some time earlier. Bach was more than ever its ruling genius; though the Concordat of August 1855, the most favourable to the claims of the Holy See of any which it succeeded in negotiating in southern Germany[2], was rather Schwarzenberg's and Count Leo Thun's work than Bach's, while the influence of the Archduchess Sophia was

[1] See the 'programme' in *Bernstorff Papers*, vol. II, pp. 91–2. He was for Prussian headship both of the Federal army and of the future representative assembly, and for an alliance with Austria, on the basis of a guarantee of *all* her dominions.

[2] As to those with Württemberg (1857) and Baden (1859), see *post*.

steadily exerted in its favour. This compact, which on the whole produced less political effect than it had, no doubt, been designed to exercise, was not abrogated till 1870. Bach's influence, however, which had risen to its height in 1856, soon afterwards began to wane, in face of an opposition that had regained much of its vigour. The supporters of Hungarian constitutional rights, of which the great-hearted and unfortunate Count Széchenyi was still able to stand forward as the literary champion (he died in 1860, on a sudden return of his mental malady), were soon to be led by the steady hand of Francis Deák; and in the German parts of the empire malcontent Liberalism was making its wishes and grievances more distinctly heard. While for a time Count Buol continued to conduct foreign affairs, the chief organ of the Emperor's absolute rule in the centralised monarchy had long been Count Grünne, the Emperor's adjutant-general. The era of Bach and centralisation—the Austrian 'New Era,' as it was bitterly called by its impassioned Bohemian adversary Palacký—came to an end with the year of the Italian War (1859); and in the same year (August) Count Goluchowski, whose sympathies as a Polish noble were federalist and who was reputed unfriendly to the German interest, was placed at the head of the Ministry, and the overwhelming personal influence of Count Grünne came to an end. Some months earlier (May), the conduct of Foreign Affairs had passed out of the hands of Count von Buol-Schauenstein into those of Count von Rechberg-Rothenlöwen, hitherto, as has been seen, Austrian plenipotentiary at the Frankfort Diet.

The year 1860 brought further changes. An attempt was made to settle the constitutional question by means of the 'October diploma,' a halfway measure establishing in the empire a semi-constitutional system on a federal basis. The return to office of Schmerling (December) was welcomed as a pledge of further constitutional progress; and a written

constitution known as the 'February patent' (1861), which included Hungary, marks his renewed political ascendancy. The previous year had been one of great financial troubles, leading to the suicide of the enterprising Freiherr von Bruck, who was succeeded as Minister of Finance by the capable Ignaz von Plener. But the hopes which the return of Schmerling had excited were to be disappointed. The Liberal Archduke Rainer stood at the head of the Government, to which the Emperor for two years gave his full confidence. But the constitution on the basis of which Schmerling had intended to carry out his policy of Liberal centralisation failed to put an end to what may be described as the conservative constitutional agitation in Hungary; and, though he called the *Reichsrat* into life, it proved, in a very literal sense, but a partial success. For it was passively ignored not only by the Magyars, but also by the Cisleithanian Čechs and Poles. Count Moritz Esterhazy, whom Schmerling had taken into the Government, and whose influence upon the Emperor was great, hated the German bureaucracy as thoroughly as he did the parliamentary system. In German affairs, his line of action had been always determined by his desire to further Austrian interests; and he was probably suspected with reason of not being really *grossdeutsch* at heart, but willing to accept a division of Germany by the line of the Main[1]. The constitutional unity of Austria was the ideal of his policy; and, when, in December 1864, a general attack upon it was delivered by a combination of mutually opposed interests, the end of his political career was seen to be at hand[2].

In the earlier years (1861–3), of which we are now speaking, Schmerling's general conduct of affairs derived

[1] Cf. J. Fröbel, *Ein Lebenslauf*, vol. II, p. 84.

[2] For a full account of Austrian affairs in this period see H. Friedjung, *Der Kampf um die Vorherrschaft in Deutschland, 1859 bis 1866*, vol. I (1897), chapter II.

little strength from Rechberg's German policy; which, indeed, had not much strength to supply. Conciliatory towards Prussia, as has been seen, in some respects, the Austrian Minister for Foreign Affairs soon made it evident that he was far from disinclined to take advantage of the internal difficulties of Prussia. How conscious Prussia was of this fact, was shown on the occasion of an interview between the King and his son-in-law, Grand-duke Frederick I of Baden, at Ostend, in September 1861. It was noted above[1] that, not long before this a striking change had taken place in the spirit of the Baden Government. Since the overthrow of the revolt of 1849 and the temporary occupation of the grand-duchy by Prussian troops, Liberal and national aspirations had here alike passed through a long period of depression. The Church of Rome had not been found wanting in her efforts to quiet the remains of popular agitation, and at the same time to carry on one of her own in favour of the long-standing claims of her episcopacy for autonomy as towards the state. Violent controversies ensued, which found ugly expression in the prohibition by the Archbishop of Freiburg (Vicari) of the funeral service ordered for the (Protestant) Grand-duke Leopold in May 1852, and, later, in the imprisonment of the contumacious prelate. In the end, it was sought to regulate the relations between Church and state by means of a Concordat with the See of Rome; and such an agreement was actually concluded in 1859.

Baden, however, was already on the eve of a great political change. In 1856, Grand-duke Frederick I, who since 1852 had been regent for his mentally incapable elder brother Lewis; married Princess Louisa, daughter of the Regent of Prussia, and, having, two years later, on his brother's death in 1858, succeeded as Grand-duke, before

[1] p. 62.

long addressed himself manfully to the sorely-needed work of reconciliation and reform. It was vigorously aided by the leading Liberal politicians of the state, both of the older and of the younger generation, from Mathy to Julius Jolly. They had not been able to prevent the conclusion of the Concordat; but this short-lived success was the last gained by the clericals. In March 1860, the Concordat was rejected by the Second Chamber; though it should be added that the rights afterwards legislatively conceded to the Church were essentially the same as those agreed on in the Concordat. The Holy See was not content with this course, and some time passed before all points in the controversy were settled[1]. In the same year, at Easter, the Grand-duke issued a much-applauded proclamation promising a constitutional system of government that should unite the sovereign and his subjects; and in May 1861 Freiherr Franz von Roggenbach, who had probably inspired this proclamation, joined the Liberal Ministry which had in 1860 been summoned by the Grand-duke. Roggenbach (then in his 37th year) was the descendant of an ancient Black Forest family, and the son of devout Catholic parents, and his father had served in the Austrian army; but he had trained himself by both study and experience to independence of judgment, and, from an early date, when he held a subordinate post in the Imperial Ministry at Frankfort, he had arrived at the conviction that the unity of Germany must be secured under the leadership of Prussia. Soon afterwards, he had been admitted to the intimacy of the Princess of Prussia, and had begun to take

[1] In Württemberg ecclesiastical affairs pursued a somewhat similar course. The Concordat concluded with Rome in 1857 by the Minister of Public Worship, the Liberal-minded Protestant Rümelin, was rejected by the Estates; and it was not till 1862 that his successor Golther succeeded in passing a law based on the conditions of the Concordat.

a warm personal interest in her son, the future Emperor Frederick III. Very great confidence was therefore placed in him, even before his advent to power marked the beginning of a period of decided national as well as Liberal policy for Baden. Roggenbach's internal reforms, which set an example of Liberal progress to the German states at large, must be passed by here. It was the action of Baden in July 1861 at the Frankfort Diet, where he had appointed the celebrated jurist Robert von Mohl envoy, that led to the subsequent action of Prussia in the Hesse-Cassel question, in which Austria thought it prudent to join and which ended with the assent of the Elector to the restoration of the constitution of 1831. In the general German question, too, Roggenbach did not let the grass grow under his feet; he discussed it with Bismarck and others, always on the basis of a free union of German states acknowledging Prussian headship, and possessed of a national representative body. This programme he, towards the end of August, laid before King William and his hesitating Minister Schleinitz at Ostend[1]. The King advised that, if a movement to this end were set on foot among the German Governments, it should not be delayed until Austria had anticipated it. Further conferences, in which Bernstorff bore a part, hereupon took place at Berlin; and Roggenbach was requested to elaborate his plan of action before it was finally examined. On December 1st, the Second Baden Chamber strengthened his hands by voting an address which identified it with the Ministerial policy.

The King of Prussia at Ostend had not spoken without foresight. Other influences were at work to move the

[1] See K. Samwer, *Zur Erinnerung an Franz von Roggenbach* (1909), p. 34. Samwer, wellknown as counsellor of both Duke Ernest II of Coburg and Duke Frederick of Augustenburg, was Roggenbach's intimate friend and correspondent.

Austrian Government to enter upon a new course of action. Between Rechberg and Schmerling there was no mutual harmony; but the German policy of the former had not been crowned with success, while Freiherr von Biegeleben, his right hand in this branch of affairs, was strongly anti-Prussian[1]. Thus, the idea commended itself at Vienna of taking into consideration schemes of reform beyond the framework of the existing Federal constitution, without, however, abandoning the axiom that the presidency of the Federal administrative and legislative organ belonged to Austria by prescriptive right. Hanover and Electoral Hesse consistently maintained the system of the present Confederation to be all that could be desired; on the other hand, a project of reform devised by Count Beust involved the danger of the Austrian ascendancy in German affairs being lowered if not altogether extinguished. For the existing Frankfort Diet he proposed to substitute Ministerial conferences between the several Governments, their sessions to last four weeks each and to be held twice a year, once at Hamburg under Prussian, and once at Ratisbon under Austrian, presidency. A representative assembly of delegates from the German parliaments was to meet from time to time under the same conditions[2]; and, finally, a Federal judicial tribunal was to be established for the decision of disputed constitutional points. The scheme, not one of its ingenious author's happiest inventions of the sort, was virtually declined in a Prussian dispatch of December the 20th, stating that the only reform Prussia could approve would be the

[1] For an admirable characterisation of Biegeleben, the last of the great Austrian state-paper writers from Bartenstein to Gentz, see Friedjung, *Vorherrschaft*, vol. I, pp. 94 ff. The difference between his and Rechberg's views helped to bring about that Minister's fall.

[2] See Beust's own account, *Memoirs*, vol. I, p. 199 (Engl. tr.).

formation within the Confederation of a smaller association of states; and on January 28th, 1862, it was vigorously denounced by Roggenbach in a circular dispatch to the German Governments. Neither, however, had it found favour at Munich, where, clinging to the long-lived vision of a *Trias*, the Government aspired to a permanent place in the new Federal directory; nor was it thought satisfactory even at Vienna.

Here, since the spring of 1861, a design, alike persistent and fluid, had been in progress which may be roughly, but not, perhaps, incorrectly, described as an attempt to make the best bargain possible between the claims and interests of Austria, on the one hand, and the now irresistible demands for Federal reform, on the other. Various motives entered into the promoting of this design till it took final shape in the Congress of Princes of 1863; but it was formed, in the first instance, on the basis of the principles of *Grossdeutschtum*, which continued to be cherished in many quarters, notwithstanding the avowed policy of Prussia and the less clearly defined aims of the *Nationalverein*. The question of priority in the suggestion of the movement is of little importance. The decisive elements in the situation to which it owed its origin were, on the one hand, the antagonism aroused in the chief secondary states by the Federal reforms advocated by Prussia, largely in consequence of her own parliamentary troubles, but put forward by her without the requisite vigour; and, on the other, the predisposition of the Austrian Government to a more active German policy. Early in 1861, Duke Ernest II of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha had, through the able publicist Hermann Orges, entered into a correspondence with Max von Gagern, now resident at Vienna, who, like that distinguished writer, belonged to the *Grossdeutschen* and was, besides, a devout Catholic, and had communicated to him a long *mémoire* on the Federal policy which it

behoved Austria to pursue[1]. Whether or not there was any truth in the rumour that the restlessly ambitious as well as patriotic Duke had aspired to the Imperial throne of the future, it must be allowed that soon afterwards he gave a convincing proof of his loyalty to the principle of Prussian leadership by inducing—it might almost be said, constraining—the Prussian Government to conclude with him a military convention which placed his troops under Prussian control (June)[2]. On his return from some months of travel in Africa[3], he was much taken up, first with the meeting of the General German Riflemen's League at Frankfort (July), where he figured as president, and then with the vacancy on the Greek throne, for which his nephew the Duke of Edinburgh and himself were, in turn, taken into consideration as candidates. Meanwhile, Max von Gagern, and, through him, the leading Ministers at Vienna, had entered into communication with a politician better fitted than the Duke of Coburg to be the confidential instrument of their designs. This was no other than Julius Fröbel, of revolutionary fame[4], who now became the correspondent and, before long, the paid agent, of a Government out of the clutches of whose predecessors he had, thirteen years earlier, barely escaped with his life.

It would take us too far to enquire into the genesis of

[1] For the text of it, see Ernest II, *Aus meinem Leben und aus meiner Zeit* (1889), vol. III, pp. 127 ff.

[2] See *ib.*, pp. 107 ff. The idea had suggested itself to the Duke so far back as 1850; the negotiations were begun by his indefatigable Minister Freiherr von Seebach, in 1860, but were carried on without enthusiasm by Schleinitz.

[3] As to the supposed reasons of the Duke for going away, see Bernhardi, vol. IV, p. 200.

[4] Cf. p. 62, *ante*. For Fröbel's negotiations 1861–3, see the long account, of which there seems no reason for doubting the substantial veracity, in *Ein Lebenslauf* (1891), vol. II, sec. VI, 'In the service of the Austrian Government.'

Fröbel's own *Grossdeutschtum*, or into the influences, old and new, which aided its present developments. At first, he, too, fell in with the idea of a triple federation of states—the Austrian and the Prussian monarchies, and a third body formed by the lesser states, who should appoint a head of their own choice. But, on being afterwards made known to Rechberg and Schmerling, this scheme met with no warm approval from the former, whose attitude towards Prussia was friendly but guarded, and with hardly more than acquiescence from his colleague, whose interest in German reform was secondary only. The two Ministers were, as observed, on anything but cordial terms with one another. Hereupon, Fröbel drew up at Kissingen (June), and submitted to the Austrian statesmen (August), a memorandum on the entire design, in which the *Trias* plan was relegated to the position of a *pis aller*. As the better way, it proposed the institution of an Imperial authority hereditary in the House of Austria, with a House of Princes (*Fürstenhaus*), of which the King of Prussia was to be the first, and the King of Bavaria the second, president—assisted by a Council of State, into which the existing Federal Diet might with ease be converted, and a People's House (*Volkshaus*), consisting of deputies from the Chambers of the several German states. After confidentially visiting the principal Courts (exclusive of Prussia, but inclusive of Baden), the indefatigable Fröbel, who soon afterwards expounded his proposals in a pamphlet for public circulation[1], submitted a revised edition of them to Rechberg, Schmerling and Biegeleben (December 13th). The result was that he was formally taken into the Government service as chief of the new propaganda, which was carried on, partly by journalistic advocacy (a paper called the

[1] *Oesterreich und die Umgestaltung des deutschen Bundes* (Austria and the Transformation of the Germanic Confederation).

Botschafter being set up for the purpose), partly by public meetings[1].

The pear seemed ripening; and the attitude of unmoved expectancy maintained by the Prussian Government, and revealed in a dispatch of Bernstorff's (December 5th) insisting on Prussia's right to form a limited Confederation, which was surreptitiously published in the Augsburg paper[2], served to stimulate interest in the design of the *Grossdeutsche*. Its ultimate success depended largely on the lead which would be given at Vienna, where it had as yet been only tentatively considered and not without hesitation as to its effect in Hungary on the one hand and Prussia on the other, and where the Emperor Francis Joseph had not yet been sounded on the subject. Before the conjuncture had been reached for venturing on this final step, more than a year was to pass by. In the meantime, the Governments of Bavaria, Württemberg, Saxony and Hanover, together with those of Nassau and Hesse-Darmstadt, had, through their plenipotentiaries, been again in conference at Würzburg, and, on February 2nd, 1862, joined the Austrian Government in an identical note to the Prussian, deprecating any diminution of the sovereign rights of the lesser Princes, but calling for a conference on the establishment of a Federal directory and an assembly of delegates[3]. The first note of the scheme of a *Fürstentag* or Conference of Princes had not yet been sounded[4]; meanwhile, the Prussian Government promptly declined the suggested conference.

[1] At one held at Frankfort, so early as October 28th, 1861, in the interest of the cause and in reply to a meeting of *Kleindeutschen* at Weimar, Heinrich von Gagern—he, too, a convert—was present.

[2] See *Bernstorff Papers*, vol. II, p. 114.

[3] 'The *grossdeutsch* devilry,' hatched by the most recent Würzburg changeling,' Roon calls this scheme, to which, he considered, the fit reply would be 'a few military conventions.' *Denkwürdigkeiten*, vol. II, p. 67.

[4] Its first mention is claimed by Duke Ernest II for Count

While the German constitutional question was thus advancing towards a new phase, the Prussian appeared to be unmistakably nearing its most critical stage. Early in December 1861, the results of the Prussian elections were decided; and, on January 14th, 1862, the new diet met. The conservative party in the Second Chamber numbered not more than 24 members while the *Fortschritt* had gained 100. The Government, in accordance with the demand of the previous Chamber, immediately brought forward, together with certain measures of a Liberal colour, a bill on military service, the conditions of which were substantially the same as those previously proposed, an effort being, however, made for retrenchment in the requisite expenditure. But, while the *Herrenhaus* at once accepted the military service bill, the *Fortschritt* party was eager for the fray, and the mediatory endeavours of Vincke and other Old-Liberals were in vain. The Prussian answer to the identical note of Austria and the Würzburgers was pronounced insufficient; and a Commission on the subject of Federal reform appointed by the new Chamber promptly reported that the Germanic Confederation had been restored without consulting the representative assemblies of the several states, that the nation had a right to the reestablishment of the *Reichsverfassung* of 1849, and that a Federation under Prussian headship, with a Federal parliament, was indispensable. The deprecatory response of the Ministry confirmed the prevalent opinion that, with a Government so timorous in its German policy, legislative approval of the proposed (and already effected) changes in the army was out of the question. Another Commission, hereupon, declared the maintenance of the principles of a two years' service essential; and, finally, the conflict was narrowed

K. F. Vitzthum von Eckstädt, in a pamphlet of 1862. See *Aus meinem Leben*, vol. III, p. 292, note.

down to a vote on the motion of the Berlin deputy Hagen, proposed on March 6th and demanding a distinct specialisation of the items of receipts and expenditure under the different heads of the budget. It was in vain that the Minister of Finance, Patow, declared that this procedure (which would manifestly have deprived the military authorities of a free hand) could not be followed on the present, but should be on the next, occasion. The motion was carried by 177 against 143 votes, and the parliamentary victory had thus been gained. Whether it was in consequence of this vote, as has sometimes been assumed, or because no doubt could remain as to the decision at which the Chamber would arrive on the all-important issue of the military service question—the Ministry now resigned. Although the King refused to accept their resignation, Prince Anton von Hohenzollern (who had for some time been indisposed) persisted in the request, as did Bethmann-Hollweg, one of the most highminded of the politicians of his time, but unable, after he had successfully led 'the Malcontents,' to overcome in office the illwill of the conservatives or to conciliate permanently that of the Liberals. The remaining Ministers recommended the immediate dissolution of the Chamber, which took place, accordingly, on March 11th. On the same day, however, as if in reply to the declaration at once put forth by the *Fortschritt* with a view to the coming elections, and insisting, among other reforms, on that of the *Herrenhaus*, the King appointed the President of that body, Prince Adolf von Hohenlohe-Ingelfingen, in Hohenzollern's place. The Liberal majority of the much-disunited Ministry, with Schwerin and Auerswald (who was incapacitated by constant illness) at their head, hereupon resigned, with the exception of the faithful Roon, who was prevailed upon to remain, and the indispensable von der Heydt, who became Minister of Finance. Conservatives of various shades (including, as Minister of

Worship and Education, the pietistic H. von Mühler[1]) took their places; and, once more, the advent of Bismarck was in the air.

The new Ministry, conservative though it was, found itself constrained at once to take a step in full agreement with Liberal opinion. It has been seen[2] how in Hesse-Cassel, both before and after the dismissal of Hassenpflug, things had continued to go from bad to worse. In 1859, Prussia proposed to the Federal Diet the reintroduction in the electorate of the 1831 constitution; and though, in the following year, the Diet provided the Elector with yet another constitution, this found no acceptance in any quarter; and, in the end, Austria joined in recommending the revival of that of 1831. When, being now called upon by both the Great Powers to insist upon the promulgation of the desired charter, the Diet proved true to itself by procrastinating a little further, the Prussian Government took the matter into its own hand by sending General A. von Willisen on a special mission to the Elector (May 11th, 1862). The King's envoy having met with arrogant rudeness at the Elector's hands, the Federal Diet now put an end to its delays, and, on May 27th, ordered the restoration of the 1831 constitution by the Elector, who, on June 21st, gave way accordingly. In the meantime, the Prussian Government had demanded the dismissal of the Electoral Ministry of which the obsequious Abée was head, as a reparation for the insult to the King, and had ordered the mobilisation of two army corps to show that it was this time in earnest. There is no reason for supposing that Bernstorff, to whom the main credit of the settlement of this wretched quarrel is due,

[1] His reactionary educational policy made him one of the best-abused men of his day; but he maintained himself in office till 1872.

[2] Vol. I, p. 543, *ante*.

would have shrunk from a warlike issue[1]; but it was not finally settled till after Bismarck had taken his place at the Berlin Foreign Office, and the Elector was brought to submission by the threat of the summons of a family council to control his rule in the interests of his dynasty (November). His *chicanes* were not yet at an end; but the final denunciation of his misrule by his Estates belongs to the fateful year 1866.

The bitterness of the Prussian party conflict was, however, such that the new Government obtained little general credit for its exertions in this interminable affair; though, in another question of far superior intrinsic importance, the Chamber could not refuse its support. In February 1853, the Austrian designs of a general German Customs Union had ended in the conclusion, through the exertions of Bruck, of a commercial treaty for six years between Austria and Prussia, which was joined in April by the other states of the *Zollverein*. It amounted to a postponement of the hoped-for wider settlement, while providing for a considerable reduction of duties on both sides. In 1860, Austria, accordingly, asked for a resumption of negotiations on the Customs Union question; but, in the same year, Prussia was invited by the French Government to discuss the project of a commercial treaty modelled on the celebrated Franco-British commercial treaty (Cobden's) of the same year and, in addition to other provisions, placing France and the *Zollverein* mutually on the footing of the most favoured nation. Though the other members of the *Zollverein*, on being consulted by Prussia, were for the most part favourable to the revisions of the tariff involved in the French proposal, Austria viewed it in a hostile light; and Rechberg, who had not abandoned the hope that Austria might yet join the *Zollverein*, insisted on the incompatibility between such a result and the conclusion by the *Zollverein*

[1] See *Bernstorff Papers*, vol. II, pp. 142–3.

of a treaty securing to France all the concessions hitherto made by Austria. The difficulty, which opened the whole problem between the more or less free-trade policy of Prussia and the northern states and the more or less protectionist policy of Austria and the south-west, was very serious. Its issue was really decided by Saxony, which resolved to allow the interests of its flourishing manufacturing industry to prevail over any political considerations, and, together with Baden and certain of the petty states, signified its adhesion to the conclusion of the commercial treaty with France, which was announced at Berlin on March 29th. On the other hand, the opportunity of a Ministerial Conference—summoned by Rechberg to Vienna, early in July 1862, for the discussion of the question of Federal reform, which Prussia had declined to attend and to which Baden had not been invited—was used by him to press the Austrian view of the French commercial treaty. The Prussian Chamber, hereupon (September 5th), approved the action of the Government in informing those of Bavaria and Württemberg that, if they rejected the French treaty, Prussia would regard this as an expression of their desire to quit the *Zollverein*. This proved decisive. Early in August, the commercial treaty with France was signed; and, before long, all the *Zollverein* Governments adhered to it. The Vienna Conference separated after expressing itself in favour of an assembly of delegates, which Bernstorff had, on behalf of Prussia, repudiated as an inadequate substitute for a real national assembly.

But, in the main matter in dispute between the Prussian Government and the Chamber, no way at all could be made against the storm which the transformation of the Ministry of the new era into a conservative Administration had fanned into fresh fury. The result of the elections of May 1862 was that all the parties in the new Chamber except the *Fortschritt* and the Left Centre (which were in the

main agreed on the army question) were reduced to numerically insignificant fractions; and not one of the Ministers had obtained a seat. When the diet reassembled, an overwhelming majority of the Second Chamber speedily agreed to adopt the advice of the Budget Commission, where the *Fortschritt* leaders had prevailed, and, on September 23rd, by a vote of 273 against 68, called upon the Government to strike the cost of the army reorganisation out of the budget for 1862, which was then passed in its reduced form, by 308 to 11 (the last-named figure being the entire strength of the conservative party). The money thus refused as either ordinary or extraordinary expenditure, and amounting to nearly six million dollars (£900,000), had, as a matter of fact, been already spent, and the new regiments duly formed; so that the Government was left to find its own way out of the quagmire. In the course of the seven days' debate which had preceded this vote, every argument was employed to demonstrate the necessity of asserting the will of the parliamentary majority as decisive; and attempts at compromise were waved aside, even one which proposed that the new regiments should be maintained, but the principle of a two years' service established[1]. Roon had at first seemed inclined to accept some such compromise; but it had not been thought possible. By its vote the Chamber had asserted what the majority, supported by public opinion, regarded as its constitutional right; and even the Minister of Finance, von der Heydt, feared that the end must be a *coup d'état*, to which he was not prepared to be a party; while Bernstorff seems to have taken up a similar position. The King, hesitating between what he regarded as his duty towards the army and the nation and what was represented to him as a course contrary to the

[1] The subsequent historian of the conflict, Sybel, was one of those who put forward an amendment to this end. (See *op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 330.)

constitution which he had sworn to observe, for a moment thought of abdicating. Bernstorff besought him not to take this fatal step, and it was chivalrously resisted by the Crown-prince[1]. In the meantime, the King resolved upon consulting the strongest man to whose courage and loyalty he could make appeal. Bismarck's hour had struck. On September 18th, he received at Paris Roon's telegram: '*Periculum in morâ. Dépêchez-vous.*' On the morning of the 22nd, he waited on the King at Babelsberg near Potsdam.

The statesman who, when at the climax of his career, was to exercise a commanding influence over the affairs of Europe, second only to that of Napoleon in the early years of the century, and who, in the last two decades of his life, was to be looked up to, by the greater part of the German nation, with an admiration approaching idolatry, was, at the time of which we write, an object of unmitigated distrust to Prussian Liberalism and to the great body of the middle-class, within and beyond the monarchy. During the first two years of his tenure of Ministerial office, this distrust and dislike deepened into detestation. Such a phenomenon, unparalleled in the history of modern political life, can only be explained by the fact that Bismarck was possessed of a genius which had gained for certain of its qualities the personal trust of two sovereigns in succession, as well as of a few among their most intimate counsellors, before he had achieved anything which could be said to justify full political confidence. King William I and Roon, like King Frederick William IV and the Gerlachs before them, knew Bismarck well enough to credit him with dauntless courage in the hour of difficulty or danger and with a sense of loyalty, which had its deepest root in religious feeling. But, like his brother, the present King had not, as yet, been quite able to overcome his apprehensions of what

[1] *Bernstorff Papers*, vol. II, p. 82; cf. Egelhaaf, *Bismarck*, p. 82.

seemed Bismarck's recklessness, or to grasp the full extent of his daring and understand the longsightedness with which he would run any immediate risk for the sake of his ultimate purpose. Yet this was not all. It was not the consistent pursuit of avowed political ideals which had hitherto been absent from German statesmanship; what it had lacked was the power in which Bismarck excelled to carry on the pursuit of his great political aims with a perfect insight into men and things as they were and presented themselves for treatment. Now, his chief political purpose was to bring into life a new Prussia, which implied that of establishing her as a real Great Power, instead of leaving her what, practically, she had been since the War of Liberation, a Great Power merely in name. Not by the acquisition of another province or two was her greatness to be achieved, but by her becoming the leader of a more or less united Germany. To the necessity of limiting conditions he never closed his eyes; and to a complete union under Prussian leadership he never saw Germany attain, or ever saw any prospect of her attaining, during the whole length of his political career. But a modified German unity under this leadership he did see consummated, and was thus able to conquer France and make Germany the first military Power in Europe.

It has been very truly said that, while, without Bismarck, Prussia could never have achieved what she did achieve, Bismarck himself could only have been produced in and by Prussia. His personality in early manhood was that of a *Junker* of the Old Mark, well but not over-educated, enjoying life but not immersed in its pleasures, amenable to strong religious influences but not subdued by them. He had begun to serve the state (after an earlier impatient abandonment of its service) by hard work as a provincial drainage commissioner, and had then become known by his dauntless utterances as deputy in the *Vereinigte*

Landtag and the Erfurt parliament. He had thus come into touch with the conservative party and the members of the Camarilla, and in 1851, at the terribly youthful age of 36, had found himself Prussian envoy at the Frankfort Diet. It was here that, though he had taken an unimpassioned view of the Olmütz breakdown, he began more clearly to understand the policy of the Austrian Government towards Prussia as well as towards Germany at large. His high spirit and his Brandenburg-Prussian pride, which had resented the bending of the royal authority in face of the Revolution, chafed under the policy of the Manteuffel *régime*, which virtually constrained the King and his diplomacy to take a lower seat. At the time of the Crimean War, this feeling helped to determine his wish to keep Prussia wholly independent of Austrian policy, if not adverse to it. He was now and for some time later on very friendly terms with the Emperor Napoleon III, whose heart he thought better than his head[1], and who, in return, was said to have considered him '*pas un homme sérieux*'; while for English ways and habits he was wont to aver a predilection which he regretted not to find always returned. But he refused to cooperate with the Prussian politicians who inclined to the Western Powers, and who were, accordingly, favoured by the Prince of Prussia and by his consort, with the latter of whom Bismarck could never agree. 'With France,' he said, 'Prussia would not succeed in keeping the peace; but with Russia she never need be involved in war unless through Liberal fatuities or diplomatic blunders[2].' Under the regency, though the Prince of Prussia, notwithstanding these differences, did not cease to consult him occasionally, he was, as he expresses it, 'put out to cool' at Petersburg, where he was skilful enough to conciliate,

[1] *Gedanken und Erinnerungen*, vol. I, p. 188.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 229.

for a time, the goodwill of Prince Gortchakoff; and, in May 1862, he was transferred to Paris. His personal intercourse with Napoleon III called forth much unwarranted suspicion at home, but served to make him aware of the uneasy desire of Austria to secure the goodwill of the French Emperor. Bismarck's own foreign policy was shaping itself more and more definitely, the nearer he approached to the tenure of power.

Already in the spring of 1860, Prince Anton of Hohenzollern and Auerswald had suggested to the Regent the appointment of Bismarck as Minister for Foreign Affairs; but, so late as the summer of 1861, he had made no secret to Roon of his unwillingness to take upon himself the inheritance of the Liberal Ministers. Bernstorff, as we saw, was appointed; but Bismarck had hardly settled down to his duties at Paris when Roon returned to the charge, and, with Bernstorff's cordial concurrence, Bismarck was at last summoned by his sovereign.

In the momentous interview which followed, the King revealed to his visitor his intention of abdicating the throne; but, finding that Bismarck, if appointed Minister, was prepared to uphold the reorganisation of the army against the majority of the Chamber, to whatever action the latter might have recourse, he decided to carry on the struggle. In return, Bismarck promised, if at any future stage of the now unavoidable conflict his own views of procedure should differ from those of the King, to make frank avowal of this, but, if necessary, to perish with his sovereign rather than abandon him in his difficulties. Hereupon, the King withdrew a long statement of conditions or safeguards which he had prepared for the interview; and on the same day the appointment was made. (The definite permanent appointment as President of the Ministry and Minister of Foreign Affairs followed on October the 8th.) A more chivalrous compact was never made between a royal King and a loyal

subject in a supremely critical hour[1]. Certain other Ministerial changes were made at the same time, Count Frederick Eulenburg, a Conservative of remarkably quick intelligence, being appointed Minister of the Interior.

Thus Bismarck faced the task which he had with so extraordinary a courage taken upon himself, fortified not only by the strength of his own character and his power of insight and foresight, but also, in part, by the confidence placed in him by his sovereign. This confidence was, as has been seen, not a plant of rapid growth; but it lasted to the end of the reign of 'the Founder of the German Empire.' For the present, as Sybel says, the appointment of Bismarck was, by the world of Liberalism, judged to be the manifest preliminary to a *coup d'état* in the style of the French despot with whom he had recently been comparing notes; and a cry went up throughout the kingdom and its confines such as is hardly credible to those not old enough to remember its shrill vehemence. At first, indeed, the new Minister sought to secure a certain amount of support by offering office to some of the Old-Liberal leaders, and to gain time by promising to lay on the table, at the beginning of the new session in January, a law regulating the period of military service, a sufficient small vote of credit being granted in the meantime; but the personal negotiation broke down on the two years' question, and the Chamber clinched matters by voting that the budget must, according to law, be submitted to it before the new year. On October 16th, the *Herrenhaus* approved the proposal of the leader of its majority, Count A. H. von Arnim-Boytzenburg, that the enlarged budget as presented by the Government should be accepted; but, on the 12th, the Second Chamber had, without a single vote to the contrary, pronounced this intervention unconstitutional. In return, Bismarck, after signifying the intention of the Government

[1] Cf. *Gedanken und Erinnerungen*, vol. I, pp. 288–9.

to maintain the reorganisation of the army, and to provide for the financial needs of the country without regard to the conditions imposed by the Constitution, in the King's name closed the session of the diet. A deadlock had thus been established, and the state was without a budget.

It is futile to enquire what ought now to have been done. If no agreement could be reached between the three factors necessary to legislation, the one factor left to manage without it till a final solution was reached could only be the Crown; for the Second Chamber was not prepared to declare itself, like the House of Commons in 1649, supreme without any King or House of Lords. That nearly four years would pass before the solution—an act of indemnity—would at last be found, was, of course, known to neither the King nor Bismarck; but, to the quick imagination of the latter, no phase or stage of political action was isolated from what might follow.

As Minister for Foreign Affairs, Bismarck, in the first instance, brought to a final completion the struggle, which Bernstorff had all but carried through, with the Elector of Hesse[1]. The commercial controversy with Austria Bernstorff had carried to a successful issue before he returned to his diplomatic post in London[2]. As to the general question of Federal reform, the Austrian proposal of conferences on the subject of a Federal Directory and an Assembly of Delegates from the Chambers of the several states[3], which Bernstorff had contented himself with declining, furnished his successor with an early opportunity of making his standpoint clear. It was during the debate on the Budget Commission (September 29th and 30th, 1863) that he first made public use of the tremendous phrase that the German question could hardly be solved by parliamentary declarations and would therefore have to be settled by 'iron and blood.' Opening his mind, in much the same sense, to the

[1] Cf. pp. 77 f., *ante*. [2] Cf. pp. 78 f., *ante*. [3] Cf. vol. I, p. 134, *ante*.

Austrian envoy at Berlin, Count Karolyi, with whom he was personally on terms of intimacy[1], he made it clear that any attempt on the part of the Austrian Government to force through the Diet a resolution beyond the competence of that body would be treated by Prussia as violating the constitution of the Confederation, from which she would then be bound to secede. At the Diet, the Bavarian plenipotentiary pressed the motion in favour of an Assembly of Delegates to a division, when it was rejected by a narrow majority of votes given on quite diverse grounds, the Prussian plenipotentiary adverting to the necessity of the alternative of a National Assembly elected by direct popular vote. But the country did not yet understand or believe that Bismarck was actually prepared to accept this alternative rather than allow the Austrian Government to play the game in which it had now begun to engage.

A collision between Prussia and Austria had thus, practically, been deferred; and, meanwhile, the internal Prussian conflict continued. But, early in 1863, the two German Great Powers, and Prussia in particular, were confronted by a new phase of an old difficulty. The insurrection that, on the night of January 22nd, broke out at Warsaw and several other garrison-towns of Russian Poland was conducted by a secret organisation which had, for some time, carried on its work there notwithstanding measures of conciliation on the part of Tsar Alexander II, and which, after the outbreak, appealed to the Prussian and Austrian Poles to support the revolt. On the other hand, the Prussian Government, without loss of time, sent General Gustav von Alvensleben to concert action with the Government of the Tsar, and actually entered into a convention (February 8th, 1863) which provided for cooperation on the frontier and, eventually, for military aid. At the

[1] It was to Karolyi that Bismarck frankly said that Austria ought to shift her centre of gravity to Buda-Pest.

suggestion, however, of Gortchakoff, who was adverse to this compact, it was made revocable on either side, and was left unratified. It met with very strong disapproval in France, but Drouyn de Lhuys was unable to prevail upon Lord John Russell and the British Government to protest in an identical note to Berlin against Prussia's conclusion of it. The convention was, however, bitterly attacked in the Prussian Chamber, where it supplied the adversaries of Bismarck with a fresh weapon of offence, and where a vote was passed by a large majority calling upon the Government to maintain complete neutrality in the Polish troubles.

The Western Powers continued their efforts to induce Austria to take joint steps at Petersburg in favour of Poland; and, though, as one of the Partitioning Powers, Austria could not easily dissociate herself from the two others, to her jealousy of Russia were now added the discrepancies between her own and Prussia's policy in both commercial and general Federal concerns. Moreover, Austria had, on religious and other grounds, always extended a kindlier treatment to her Polish subjects than their fellows under Russian or Prussian rule had received. Thus, reviving the relations of the late Russian War, Rechberg was fain to accord some measure of support to the Polish policy of the Western Powers; and the notes addressed by them to Russia (April 10th and 12th), protesting against the disregard of the responsibilities undertaken by Russia to Poland in 1815, were supplemented by an Austrian note, pointing out the ill-effects upon Galicia of the present condition of things in Russian Poland, and calling for the establishment of permanent tranquillity there. In reply, the Russian Government declined all intervention and insisted that the source of the evils complained of was the universal spread of the revolutionary propaganda. The Russian armament in Poland was in its full strength, and the terrorism now

exercised there was intensified by the enthusiasm of the Russian people. Tsar Alexander, hereupon, in an autograph letter addressed by him to King William (June 1st), sought his help in an attempt to detach Austria from the Western Powers, and, in the event of failure, proposed to him a joint attack upon her before France could come to her aid. For this venture, however, neither the King nor Bismarck was as yet prepared[1]; and the reply to the Tsar which the Minister personally drafted for his master, urged amicable representations to Austria, extending if possible to a guarantee of Venetia. When (June 17th and 18th) the Western Powers addressed further notes to Russia, an Austrian note, once more, went a long way in the same direction as theirs—but not all the way. Thus, while declining all proposals for a European Conference on Polish reforms, and answering France in a tone of defiance, Gortchakoff could declare Russia ready for a consultation with the two other Eastern Powers on a subject of common interest to them (July 13th). But to this, again, Rechberg was, after all, found indisposed; and, in contrast with the unbroken confidence which had been maintained between Russia and Prussia, the relations of the former Power with Austria were again becoming uneasy, when Austria's action in the question of German Federal reform once more, deliberately and unmistakably, provoked the jealous claims of her German rival.

We have arrived at the period of the last attempt of Austria—confident in the support of *grossdeutsche* sympathies both in her own dominions and in other parts of Germany, and on friendly terms with France—to settle the everlasting German question by means of a constitutional change which should establish, on a new footing and a

[1] Russia, he said, would, in the case of such a conflict, be at the longer arm of the lever. See Sybel (vol. II, p. 388), whose revised account of these transactions I follow.

broad basis, the Austrian primacy of the days before the Revolution of 1848. During the spring and summer of 1863, while the Polish difficulty was in progress, and Russia was suggesting to Prussia the chances of a joint war against Austria and France, success in which would have enabled Prussia to settle German affairs as she chose, the rupture between Government and Chamber had been finally proclaimed. The address, voted by the Chamber on reassembling (January 14th) condemned the unconstitutional proceeding of the Government; and Bismarck defiantly hurled back the charge of Virchow, that the Minister was speaking 'a Prussian language, which nobody here understood.' Later (May 11th) one of the Vice-presidents of the Chamber, Bockum-Dolffs, a Left-centre Liberal, called the Minister of War to order, and adjourned the sitting. The written protest of the Ministers, who refused to return to their places, was countered by an address of the Chamber to the King, who declined to receive it and (May 27th) closed the session of the diet[1]. Then ensued a period of official persecution, in which the Ministers of the Interior (Eulenburg) and of Justice (Count zur Lippe) left no stone unturned to bring back the entire body of Prussian officials to political servitude—more especially in the conduct of the elections—as well as to subject the press to an unprecedented system of tribulation[2]. The intensity of the political conflict at this time was further shown by a grave misunderstanding between the King and the Crown-prince, who openly dissociated himself from the action of the Ministry; but, to the credit

[1] For a full account of this tragicomic affair, see Roon, *Denkwürdigkeiten*, vol. II, pp. 132 ff.

[2] Any journal whose general tone seemed open to objection might, after two warnings, be suspended or suppressed. As to the treatment of the Prussian Press by the Government, see O. Bandmann, *Die deutsche Presse*, etc., 1864–6 (*Leipziger Histor. Abhandl.*, 1910), p. 4. In 1864 there were 175 press prosecutions in Berlin alone.

of both, as well as of the sovereign's chief advisers, it was brought to a timely end. On September 4th (in view perhaps of the favourable effect of the Government firmness in the matter of the *Fürstentag*, it was judged expedient to dissolve the diet; but the elections (October) made no essential change in the relations of parties—the conservatives in the Chamber, however, contriving to raise their numbers from 11 to 37. In January 1864 the budget, again docked of its objectionable military provisions by the Second Chamber, was again thrown out in this form by the *Herrenhaus*, and the session was closed.

We saw how, early in 1862, the Austrian Foreign Office had taken up the idea of a Conference between the German Governments, which should discuss the national problem, more especially from the point of view of the establishment of a Federal Directory and of an Assembly of Delegates from the several Chambers. The project, rejected by Prussia, had lapsed; but, as the year 1862 went on, and the parliamentary conflict in Prussia became more and more hopeless, the design of placing the Austrian Government at the head of the movement for Federal reform took more definite shape; and, already in July, confidential Ministerial conferences on the subject were held at Vienna, in which most of the German Governments, except Prussia, took part, though hopes of her future participation in the movement were expressed. According to Fröbel[1], it was on returning from a meeting of the *Grossdeutschen* at Frankfort, late in October or early in November, that he first expressed a desire that the Emperor of Austria should be made acquainted with the notion of an Assembly of Princes (*Fürstentag*), under the Imperial presidency, for the settlement of German affairs. A cryptic correspondence on the subject ensued, in which part was taken by Freiherr von Dörnberg, who was in the confidence of the

[1] *Lebenslauf*, vol. II, p. 236.

Thurn and Taxis family and more especially of the Hereditary Prince Maximilian, the Emperor Francis Joseph's brother-in-law. Whatever may be the truth as to the dynastic ambitions of the House of Thurn and Taxis and as to its hopes of a west-German kingdom formed in part at the expense of Prussia, there can be no doubt that the 'Ratisbon' interest was in favour of the ultramontane party and had access to the ear of the Emperor[1].

It was through these channels that, sometime in May, the scheme seems to have come before him, rather than through his Ministers, of whom Rechberg in particular for some time remained out of touch with it, while it was actively taken up by his assistant Biegeleben. Early in June, the Emperor's Ministers were apprised that his mind was made up. Rechberg offered to resign his office, but was induced by the Emperor to retain it and, on condition of his attending his sovereign at the Congress, support the new plan of Federal reform.

While the design was still a secret, the Duke of Coburg found his way to Vienna. He was out of heart with the Prussian Government, which in March had begun to persecute the *Nationalverein* by prohibiting the circulation of its weekly journal, and he had recently remonstrated with the King (through the Crown-prince) on Prussia's self-isolation in Germany[2]. But he was not, or was only half, initiated into the Austrian plan, and confesses that he had not the faintest influence upon the draft which was prepared for submission to the German Princes[3].

[1] Cf. as to the Ratisbon influence Friedjung, vol. I, pp. 52 ff.

[2] See *Aus dem Leben*, vol. III, pp. 278 ff., with the King's *marginalia*.

[3] *Ib.*, p. 298. Duke Ernest II's account of the transactions connected with the *Fürstentag*, and of the proceedings there, have, together with the political character of the Duke himself, been subjected to severe criticism by K. Dorien in an essay published in the Munich *Historische Bibliothek* (vol. XXI, 1910). It may seem

On August 2nd, the King of Prussia was visited during his stay at Gastein by the Emperor Francis Joseph, and informed by him that he proposed to invite, for August 16th, all the German sovereigns and free cities to a personal conference under his presidency on the subject of German constitutional reform. Though the King was not presented with a fully elaborated scheme, its main points were communicated to him in writing, including (in accordance with Fröbel's revised draft of December 1861) the establishment of a Federal Directory of five members and of a Federal Parliament consisting of delegates of the several German states, with consultative powers only. A permanent Federal Tribunal, and periodical Congresses of the German Princes were, also, to form part of the scheme (this last being, indeed, its most prominent novel feature). In replying to these proposals, which were prefaced by a description of the Federal pact of the past as virtually extinct, the King, without formally declining to take part in a discussion of them, at once raised certain objections to the proposals about to be made. He pointed out that, more especially as their failure must be attended by unfortunate consequences, the proposals ought to have been preceded by Ministerial conferences on the points contained in them; and he dwelt particularly on the doubtfulness of the provisions for including in the Directory three members in addition to those representing Austria and Prussia, and for assembling Delegates sent from Chambers in many cases unsatisfactorily composed. But—and, as Bismarck afterwards justly pointed out[1], herein lay Prussia's real grievance against

surprising that, for a time at least, the action of Austria should have taken captive the imagination of the sanguine Duke; but his expectations were widely shared, *e.g.* by British diplomacy. The Duke's diary shows that during the gathering at Frankfort he was in constant communication with the opposition and with Prince Anton of Hohenzollern, and therefore aware of the views of the Prussian Government.

[1] Duke Ernest II, *Aus dem Leben*, vol. III, p. 297.

Austria—the Emperor had not taken any steps towards a previous discussion with the Prussian Government of the question of reforms; indeed, he had not so much as waited for the King's reply, before he sent out his invitations for the Congress (dated July 31st). King William now definitively declined participation in a conference on the purposes of which he had not been previously consulted, and repeated his fundamental objection to the proposed Directory, while declaring the consultative Assembly of Delegates valueless. Hereupon, on the Austrian side, certain amendments were made in the draft scheme: the King of Bavaria was accorded a fixed seat in the Directory, and the Assembly of Delegates was given legislative as well as consultative powers. On August 17th, amidst general jubilation, the city of Frankfort beheld the assembling of the Congress of Princes. Whatever came of it, the continuance of the old Confederation had once for all been declared impossible by Austria; but Prussia stood aloof, and what was now to ensue?

The proceedings, of which the protocol was taken by Biegeleben, a lesser Gentz without a Metternich, were opened by a skilfully-prepared speech on the part of the Emperor of Austria, which was, more or less, echoed by the King of Bavaria. Hereupon, the Grand-duke of Mecklenburg-Schwerin at once let in light upon the situation by proposing that an invitation to attend the Congress should be sent to the King of Prussia. The King of Saxony then proposed that this invitation should be preceded by a twofold resolution, affirming, first, that the imperial draft formed a satisfactory basis for discussion by the Congress, and, further, that this discussion should proceed, whatever reply might be given by the King of Prussia. This being carried, King John departed in person with the summons to his royal friend at Baden-Baden. King William hesitated for a moment—'thirty rulers and a King as courier!'—but then returned a refusal. Bismarck had gained his first

great victory over the scrupulous loyalty of his master, and had gained it both by the clearness of his view and the firmness of his bearing; he was ready to accompany the King to Frankfort, but would not return as his Minister to Berlin.

At the Congress, it was now, after a rather informal discussion, agreed to treat all resolutions as, in the first instance, provisional, and then to take a final vote expressing the will of the assembly, so as to come as near as possible to unanimous decisions. The debates, over which the Emperor of Austria presided with remarkable ability and tact, were managed with much skill by the King of Saxony on behalf of the majority, which proved an assured one from the first, though it would be a mistake to regard it as 'packed' by Austria—the King of Hanover had only come for the sake of courtesy, and the Elector of Hesse to find food for his sarcasms. The Grand-duke of Baden found few to support his amendments—chiefly the Grand-dukes of Weimar and Oldenburg, and occasionally the more erratic Duke of Coburg, Waldeck and the Younger Reuss. Thus the project was rapidly worked into shape. It was not altogether lacking in improvements upon the existing Federal constitution. A Federal Judicial Tribunal was to be established, whose functions should include a settlement of differences between the Governments and the representative assemblies of the several states. Above all, the requirement of unanimity for resolutions of the Federal Diet—now to be called the Federal Council—was to be sufficiently restricted. All questions of war and peace were to be referred to the Directory, together with the ordering of mobilisation and the naming of the Federal Commander-in-chief; but an actual declaration of war was to require the approval of the Federal Council by a two-thirds' majority, and, ultimately, it was decided that the same rule should apply to questions of the defence of non-

Federal territories belonging to a member of the Confederation[1].

The one subject of discussion, however, which seemed to defy settlement, was that of the Directory itself, dealt with in the fifth article of the draft. Various proposals were brought forward as to the composition of the Directory; but of these the compromise magnanimously proposed by the King of Saxony[2] found most favour, though there were many reservations. The real *crux* however lay in the rider (*alinea*) to the article, which provided for the assignment to Austria of the presidency in both Directory and Council, while Prussia was merely to take Austria's place vicariously. After the article had been passed without its rider, on the motion of the King of Saxony, a long series of negotiations followed; and, at the very last meeting of the Conference (September 1st) the Emperor Francis Joseph left the chair in order that the question might be settled in his absence. In the end, article and rider were carried against the vote for the omission of the latter proposed by the Grand-duke of Baden, and supported by his usual allies (with Holland (Luxemburg) and Hamburg), while the reservation by which Coburg's affirmative vote was accompanied and which made it conditional upon any future discussion of the subject being unaffected by it, was not committed to paper, and, in point of fact, ignored[3].

[1] Austria had originally demanded that these should be decided by simple majority.

[2] According to this, the six seats in the Directory were to be thus distributed: Austria, Prussia and Bavaria were each to have a permanent seat; the three other kingdoms to rotate in every second year; the seven grand-duchies with the electorate, and the petty principalities with the Free Towns, to choose a representative respectively in every third year.

[3] It is due to the honourable character of Duke Ernest to accept in substance his account of the part played by him in these transactions; but it is not the less evident that what he had at heart

This matter having been, after a fashion, brought to a conclusion, the proposal of Hanover and Brunswick that the draft scheme should now be submitted in its entirety was carried unanimously (with a reservation on the part of Baden). The final resolutions as to the acceptance of the whole scheme, and as to the binding character of this acceptance, until the Federal states unrepresented at the Congress (i.e. Prussia) should have definitively rejected the scheme or offered counterproposals, were affirmed by 24 as against 6 votes (consisting of the Grand-duke of Baden and his supporters, without the Duke of Coburg). Hereupon, the communication of the result to the King of Prussia was approved, and the Congress closed after a speech from the Emperor.

It should be added that, by the side of the Congress of Princes, a self-constituted assembly of deputies from the Chambers of all the German states except Austria had been holding meetings at Frankfort, and had voted the necessity of an Imperial parliament chosen by direct popular election, which should, jointly with the German Governments, settle the future national constitution on the basis of a concession of equal rights to the two Great Powers.

Those who can remember the stir made by the assembling of the Frankfort *Fürstentag* will also recall the indifference with which the result of the gathering was received by the German public. As a whole, it had never deceived itself as to the hollowness of the whole proceeding. At Berlin, a reply was drafted to the last communication of the Congress, expressing the willingness of Prussia to enter into further discussion of Federal reform at Ministerial conferences, but laying down as indispensable conditions of their conclusions, the right of Prussia, as well as of Austria, to negative any declaration of Federal war, and the concession

above everything else was to avoid a breakdown of the whole design on the rock of the Austrian presidency.

to Prussia of complete equality with Austria in the matter of the presidency over the supreme Federal authorities. In other words, Prussia demanded precisely what the Congress, and Austria through the Congress, had refused to her. This reply was communicated to the German Governments, and all thought of Prussia's acquiescence in the final vote of the Congress was at an end. Rechberg, whose task it had now become to make the best of a failure which he had from the first half-feared, could not even induce the secondary Governments to press on the Austrian scheme approved by them without the concurrence of Prussia. At a Ministerial Conference held by 'the Würzburgers' at Nürnberg (October 23rd), it was prudently agreed that the Austrian Government should charge itself with a reply to the last Prussian communications; but Rechberg's subsequent demand that the changes approved by the Congress should at once be put in execution—in other words, that no concession should be made to Prussia by Austria—was declined on all sides; so that failure was now written across the adopted draft. While Queen Victoria's imagination had, by the glamour of the *Fürstentag*, been misled into apprehensions for 'her children at Berlin' on whose behalf she appealed to the omnipotent Emperor of Austria when she met him on his way home from Frankfort[1], the Austrian attempt to settle the future of Germany without Prussia had broken down, and Austria's diplomacy had to hark back to the old ways. Once more, resort must be had to cooperation, at all events for the time, between the two German Great Powers. The acute stage at which the perennial Schleswig-Holstein question had once more arrived seemed to furnish a suitable opportunity; but the final consequence of the temporary conjoint action between Austria and Prussia to which it led was to be the outbreak of the decisive conflict between them.

[1] Duke Ernest II, *Aus dem Leben*, vol. III, p. 351.

CHAPTER II

THE SCHLESWIG-HOLSTEIN QUESTION AND THE DANISH WAR, 1864

When 1863 drew towards its close, to be followed by a year destined to exercise a far-reaching effect upon the political future of Europe, the two German Great Powers, as was seen in the preceding chapter, were still full of anxiety concerning their own political prospects; nor was either of them free from suspicious jealousy of the other. Austria's ascendancy in the Confederation had, in some measure, suffered from the unconfessed breakdown of a project of Federal reform which, could it have carried the day, would have secured to her a new lease of leadership among the German states, but which had actually brought her nothing beyond the transient support of *grossdeutsche* sympathies and inflated personal ambitions. In her turn, Prussia had not omitted to take the opportunity of asserting her claims to a due share in the discussion and settlement of any scheme of national reorganisation. But the aims of her statesmanship lay in other directions, and for the present her tentative suggestions towards Federal reform remained in the vague. Meanwhile, the deadlock in her constitutional life was left complete; and the conflict between Government and parliament, further embittered by the Polish policy (of which the self-restraint shown towards Russia's ulterior proposals was kept secret), seemed to be passing all bounds. The highminded judgment of Bennigsen was at one with the ardour of Treitschke in condemning, for Prussia's own sake and for that of Germany, the policy of the Prussian Government. In the autumn of 1863, it was reported that the King himself met with scant respect in the

streets of his capital; and the army was involved in the popular odium which surrounded the Ministerial champions of its efficiency[1]. The condition of public affairs seemed irremediable; or, rather, it was at this very time that a prophetic voice made itself heard at Berlin, recommending the application of a remedy never dreamt of by the parliamentary politicians of the Second Chamber and, indeed, intended to sweep them away with their imposed constitution[2].

[1] See the section 'The beginnings of Bismarck's Ministry' in vol. v of the *Diaries* of T. von Bernhardi, already cited. Bernhardi's political (and military) knowledge and judgment were based on researches which have secured to him a lasting name among investigators of modern political history, and he was an observer of great shrewdness, as he showed in his letters from London, where early in 1864 he sought without much effect to advance the Augustenburg cause, and still more in those from Florence, whither he was sent by Bismarck in 1866, and again in 1867, to supplement the dispatches of Usedom and to make himself generally useful. Occasionally, he attached too much importance to his private information, and, occasionally, to his own insight. But as to the general correctness of his account of the state of public feeling in Prussia in 1863 there can be no doubt; and it is not wonderful that he should have hailed the death of Frederick VII of Denmark as 'an invaluable piece of good fortune.' (Cf. *op. cit.*, p. 145.)

[2] A notable incident (though only a passing reference can be made to it here) in the course of the 'conflict' was the appearance on the scene at Berlin, in the autumn of 1863, of Ferdinand Lassalle. This socialist philosopher and agitator, the founder of the General Association of Working-men (*Allgemeiner Arbeiterverein*) was as far as possible from wishing to play the part of a mediator between the Government and the Chamber. As a contributor to the first volume of the *Demokratische Jahrbücher* (1860), he had advocated German unity under Prussian leadership, though not on a federal basis; now, he had advanced to the further paradox that the Prussian constitution, about which Parliament and *Fortschritt* were making so much ado, was a usurpation, arbitrarily imposed, selfishly accepted in the interests of a class, and of no value to the people at large. He, therefore, demanded the introduction of universal

Thus it had come to pass that, with Austria uncertain of her position in Germany, and Prussia and the Minister now at the head of her affairs, notwithstanding his self-confidence, unwilling to risk isolated action, neither of the two Powers could at present seek to advance its own ends independently of the other, and least of all to do so in deference to the wishes or counsels of any non-German Power. Hence, they responded without cordiality, though Prussia after a conciliatory fashion, to the invitation addressed, on November 4th, by Napoleon III to the Governments of Europe—including those of the German secondary states, Bavaria, Saxony, Württemberg and Hanover—to a Congress to be held in Paris for the purpose of a general revision of the Treaties of 1815. It seemed safer, to say the least,—more especially since there was no reason for supposing the French Emperor's political sentiments towards Austria and Prussia to be at any given moment

suffrage, unlawfully withheld from the masses. It is extremely unlikely that Lassalle, the gradual unfolding of whose political philosophy was disturbed only by an inordinate selfconsciousness and by that dependence on popular applause which is essential to demagogues, was in these utterances influenced by the Prussian Government, although it suited the Liberal press to decry him as a tool of the Reaction. Bismarck received him more than once and (as is far from surprising) was attracted by his vivid personality. But official prosecutions were allowed to run their course against him; nor did he live to see the adoption of the principle of universal suffrage, urged by him in the address to the Berlin workmen in October 1863, which subjected him to a trial for high treason. Before he met with a tragic death (August 31st, 1864), he had completed the literary exposition of the ideas which brought about the new, though not the ultimate, development of German socialism. What concerns us here is that the policy which, in 1867, was applied in a wider sphere of action, had been openly suggested while the Prussian parliamentary conflict was at its height, and declared by Lassalle to be certain of ultimate adoption. (See the long and instructive article on Lassalle, by E. Plener, in *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie*, vol. XVII.)

the same—in other words, since it was transparently his purpose to play off each one of these Powers against the other—that, as to the main issues now before Europe, they should act in mutual conjunction only, at all events in the first instance.

These, then, were the conditions under which at this time Austria and Prussia essayed to bring to an issue the Schleswig-Holstein question, once more, but this time with irresistible urgency, pressing on them for attention. Neither could refuse to take action upon it; but the difference between them was that, while Austria, more especially after her recent rebuff, engaged in this task only lest Prussia should seek to carry it through without her, Prussian policy had now, though not within the knowledge of the Prussian parliament and people, or of German Liberalism in general, fallen under the guidance of a will sure of its final aims, and firm in carrying out, step by step, the process by which it had resolved upon accomplishing them. While the *doctrinaires* of the *Nationalverein* and the hotspurs of the *Fortschritt* still looked forward to the overthrow of Bismarck as the indispensable prelude to a forward German policy on the part of Prussia, he had no intention of preparing a second Olmütz for her by following public opinion with all its paraphernalia of Chambers, associations and the like, and by breaking with Austria so as to provoke a hostile combination of other Powers[1]. Yet few things are more certain than that the way of settling the Schleswig-Holstein question actually adopted in the end was, although he had not invented it[2], in his

[1] See his letter to Count R. von der Goltz (December 24th, 1863), *Gedanken und Erinnerungen*, vol. II, p. 10.

[2] As to the earlier history of the idea of the annexation of the duchies to Prussia, see Gebauer, *Herzog Friedrich VIII von Schleswig-Holstein*, p. 73. Cf. also Beust (Engl. tr.), vol. I, p. 244, as to Savigny's pronouncement when envoy at Dresden 'shortly after 1860.'

mind from the first. Whether the settlement was intended by him merely as a stepping-stone to subserve the achievement of designs of a wider scope, is a question which cannot be put or answered after the same fashion. But, as to Schleswig-Holstein, he was, within the limits of the feasible, resolved upon his course. Within the limits of the feasible —for in his constant recognition of those limits lay much of the strength of Bismarck's statesmanship both now and in the greater issues which awaited it. Neither were all the turns to which he had resort in his treatment of this particular problem premeditated; nor was he from the first definitively resolved upon insisting on the decision which commended itself to him. Nor, finally, was the number large of those who were throughout consciously determined to do their utmost towards furthering his plan of action, or who were even in general agreement with its purpose[1].

With the death of King Frederick VII of Denmark on November 15th, 1863, the Schleswig-Holstein question, which some survive to remember as an abiding heritage of modern politics[2], entered into a new phase. Or, to

[1] One of these was Roon. 'Believe me,' he wrote to C. T. Perthes so early as January 17th, 1864, 'in one respect you are bitterly unjust to Bismarck; on this head, he has never been unclear, uncertain or unstable in will; nor have I myself, since, within the first four-and-twenty hours after the death of Frederick VII, the delusive bubble burst of a popularity to be gained only at the cost of principles and monarchical interests.' The whole passage (*Denkwürdigkeiten*, vol. II, p. 180), though too long to cite here, is of great significance.

[2] Almost as I write, a reprint (November, 1915) reaches me of two articles contributed, from opposite points of view, to *The Nineteenth Century*, May and December, 1897, by the late Professor Max-Müller and by Dr A. D. Jörgensen, formerly Keeper of the Danish Archives. Max-Müller's article was based on Jansen-Samwer's work, published in 1897, which, at that date, might have been left to speak for itself. The Danish reply could not be called exhaustive.

speak more exactly, the acuteness of the stage which it had already reached was rendered more acute by the introduction of a succession dispute of which it had long stood on the brink, but which the European Concert chose to regard as permanently averted. This revival of inherited claims, which had been held superseded by an incomplete international compact, was necessarily inseparable from renewed insistence upon historical state rights more than ever imperilled; and, finally, the whole conflict was dominated by the struggle between nationalities, intensified, to an unprecedented degree, by a decade of oppressive local rule.

It may be well, before examining rather more precisely the operation of those elements in the problem which brought about the war of 1864, to take this opportunity of recalling, in their general connexion, and in as few words as possible, the chief data in the earlier stages of the question.

Before 1459 the duchy of Schleswig was held as a fief of Denmark, and the duchy of Holstein as a fief of the Empire. But the elective capitulation, whereby in 1460 King Christian I of Denmark (renouncing his countship of Oldenburg and Delmenhorst) became Duke of Schleswig and Count of Holstein—titles consolidated, fourteen years later, into that of Duke of Schleswig-Holstein—laid down the following principles, to which the King swore as essential to his compact with the Estates of the two duchies and fundamental in his and his successors' tenure of the lordship over them. The two duchies were to be for ever united; their rights and liberties were to remain intact; the power of taxation was to belong to the Estates; and these Estates were to be obliged to elect their future Dukes from among the male descendants of Christian I or his rightful heirs. In 1616, the Estates surrendered their privilege of election, and the rights of the male heirs became absolute, to be asserted in due order of sequence.

In 1544, however, with the consent of the Estates, a partition was made in the case of both duchies, which finally resulted in the two portions of each, called severally the ducal-royal and the ducal-Gottorp portions, being respectively vested in King Christian III of Denmark and in Duke Adolphus of Schleswig-Holstein-Gottorp and their descendants, though they were administered in common (*zu gesammter Hand*). Further partitions followed, which must be neglected; but, ultimately, the right of succession to the whole of the duchies of Schleswig and Holstein belonged to the male heirs of the elder royal line, the descendants of King Christian III, with reversion to those of the younger royal or Sonderburg line, comprising the Augustenburg[1] and the Beck-Glücksburg branches, and after these to those of the ducal-Gottorp line, which comprised the Russian, the Swedish and the ducal-Oldenburg branches.

But, in the case of Schleswig, it was afterwards alleged that the law of succession had been merged in that of the Danish kingdom. This latter had been promulgated on a new basis by King Frederick III of Denmark in 1665, by virtue of the absolute power acquired by the Danish sovereigns through the change in the constitution of the kingdom made in 1665. This *lex regia*, as it was called, permitted the succession to the Danish throne of female descendants of King Frederick III, or of males inheriting through them. In itself, of course, the law of succession in the duchies remained unaltered by the *lex regia*; nor could the law of succession in one of the duchies have been modified independently of that in the other. But, at the Peace of Frederiksborg (1720) King Frederick IV of Denmark, who had for the second time made himself master of these territories, was acknowledged by Sweden as

[1] The particular objections afterwards raised to the claims of the Augustenburg line are noted below.

the possessor of the ducal-Gottorp portion of Schleswig, which had up to that date belonged to the Dukes of Schleswig-Holstein-Gottorp, though (as has been seen) under a system of joint administration; and a guarantee of this transfer was at the same time given by the mediating Powers, Great Britain and France. In the following year (1721), a royal proclamation of their acquisition was issued by Frederick IV. Danish historians represent this transaction as the restoration of these districts by force of arms to the mother-country[1]; but, whether or not this description of the transaction be warranted, there was and could be no incorporation at this date of the ducal-Gottorp portion of Schleswig, and still less of the whole duchy of Schleswig, in the Danish kingdom. After the royal patent of 1721 had proclaimed that the King had become possessed of this portion of the duchy, the Estates of the portion took the oath *secundum tenorem legis regiae*. Whatever may be the meaning of this 'still-vext' clause, neither the oath nor the guarantees of the two Foreign Powers in any way touched the question of the succession to the entire duchy of Schleswig. This question could not, either by treaty or by proclamation, be treated separately from that of the succession to both the duchies; moreover, it involved the rights of other parties and could not therefore be made the subject of an international guarantee. It may be added that the oath taken on this occasion by Duke Christian August of Augustenburg in respect of his lands in the ducal-Gottorp portion of Schleswig, in no way, as was afterwards pretended at Copenhagen, affected the eventual right of succession of himself or his descendants in both the duchies.

Appeal was, also, afterwards made to the treaties concluded in 1767 and 1773, between Denmark and Russia, in

[1] For instance, C. F. Allen in his *History of Denmark* (French translation, 1878, vol. II, p. 139).

which the rights of the Russian or eldest branch of the Gottorp line to the ducal-Gottorp portion of Schleswig, and to the ducal-Gottorp portion of Holstein, were ceded to King Christian VII of Denmark by Tsarina Catharine II and her son Paul (afterwards Tsar Paul I), Duke of Holstein-Gottorp, in return for the counties of Oldenburg and Delmenhorst, which were immediately transferred to Prince Frederick Augustus of the younger Gottorp line (whereupon an imperial decree created a duchy of Holstein-Oldenburg). This cession, the object of which was the legal completion of the Danish title to the Gottorp portions in both duchies, had, again, no reference to the rights to the succession to both duchies as a whole, which the Russian like the other *agnati* might eventually claim.

Finally, the established law of succession in the duchies was not, and could not be, affected by the circumstances, however important politically, that Schleswig belonged in full sovereignty to its duke, whereas Holstein, like Lauenburg, formed part of the Germanic Empire till 1806, and from 1815 of the Germanic Confederation[1]. Indeed, when in 1806 King Christian VII renounced allegiance to the moribund Empire, he declared that the law of succession in Holstein remained unchanged, and, in 1815, King Frederick VI gave a solemn assurance that the *nexus socialis* between the duchies should remain as before. As to the duchy of Lauenburg—ceded by Hanover by the Act of the Congress of Vienna and immediately afterwards exchanged in a separate treaty by Prussia to Denmark for Swedish Pomerania[1]—all earlier claims had been extinguished by the final cession. Whether the law of succession in Lauenburg had been merged with the sovereignty over the duchy in authority of the Danish Crown, is a disputed point.

[1] At the Peace of Kiel in January 1817 Denmark had received Swedish Pomerania in exchange for Norway; now, she had to exchange it for Lauenburg.

If from the dynastic we pass to the general relations affecting the duchies and the Danish kingdom, there seems no necessity, in the present connexion, for going back beyond the European settlement of 1815. It should, however, be added, though the grievance cannot be said to have assumed an international aspect, that, towards the close of the eighteenth and in the early years of the nineteenth century, the advance of the German language in the mixed or Danish districts of Schleswig was promoted by methods which gave rise to much complaint, and which, in 1810, called forth a royal decree for the restoration of the use of Danish in a number of churches and schools where it had been suppressed. Conversely, and in a wider theatre, the part played by Denmark in the Napoleonic wars added to the unpopularity of Danish rule in the duchies. In the final struggle with Napoleon Denmark was his solitary northern ally, while the enthusiasm of the War of Liberation was largely shared on the other side of the Eider. In the pacification which followed, the loss of Norway, while diminishing the importance of the Danish monarchy as a whole, necessarily reduced the hitherto overwhelming preponderance within its area of the Scandinavian over the German element of population[1].

Thus, the period that followed could not but exhibit a constantly increasing tension between Denmark and the duchies, which at first showed itself in a continuous conflict waged by them on behalf of their constitutional rights against the centralising designs of an absolute, before long to become a democratic, monarchy, and which, in accordance with the general tendencies of the age, became a

[1] A quarter of a century later—in 1840—the census reckoned the total of inhabitants of the kingdom of Denmark (entirely Danish) at 1,283,000; of those of Holstein and Lauenburg (entirely German) at 455,000 *plus* 45,000; and of those of Schleswig (more than half German) at 348,000.

movement of nationality against nationality. It has been already seen that nothing came either of the promises of Frederick VI or of the appeal, in 1822, of the Schleswig-Holstein Estates and prelates to the Frankfort Diet[1]; and how the wider and more popular current of resistance to Danish ascendancy (not yet to Danish rule), which set in as part of the movement consequent upon the French Revolution of 1830, seemed likewise to have spent itself in vain. This time, the strength of feeling, stimulated more especially in the middle-class, by Lornsen's pamphlets already mentioned[2], was such that King Frederick VI, who had resisted the Estate of Knights, gave way so far as to approve the summoning of representative assemblies in the several parts of the monarchy, including Schleswig and Holstein. But the functions of these assemblies were to be consultative only; and the Estates of Holstein and Lauenburg were convened, at Itzehoe (1835), separately from those of Schleswig, which met at Schleswig (1836). Thus, in point of fact, the concession, so far as the duchies were concerned, proved more than futile. Public opinion at Copenhagen, while indulging in Pan-Scandinavian visions (against which, in 1837, the Swedish Government thought it necessary to protest), came more and more to regard the political union of Denmark and Schleswig as an established axiom, and to do all in its power to make it an established fact. Hence, the continued efforts of the Eider-Danes—the name given, in contrast with the party desirous of preserving the entirety of the monarchy, to those politicians who were prepared to sacrifice Holstein, as incontrovertibly belonging to the Germanic Confederation, and as altogether German in nationality, in order to bring about the consolidation of Schleswig with the kingdom. Hence, too, a movement, from about 1836, in favour of the use

[1] Cf. vol. I, pp. 150 ff., *ante*.
[2] Cf. vol. I, pp. 286 ff., *ante*.

of the Danish language in churches, schools and administration in parts of Schleswig, which is described as a 'reaction' by Danish apologists[1], and which, though it obtained the transitory approval of the Schleswig diet, met with a resolute resistance, steadily continued even after it had been approved eight years later, by King Christian VIII, and revived more vigorously than ever.

By this time (1846), the King's mind seems to have been at last made up with regard to his policy in the matter of the duchies and their relation to Denmark. His Danish subjects had long suspected him of favouring the duchies by reason of his marriage with an Augustenburg princess[2]. Now, however, he had shaken himself free from these influences. The 'open letter' issued by him on July 8th, 1846, first announced his intention of preventing the dismemberment of his dominions by altering the succession in the duchies in conformity with that in the kingdom[3]. The patent declared the law of succession in Schleswig (and in Lauenburg) to be identical with that obtaining in Denmark. As to Holstein, its terms were more guarded; but it held out a prospect of the difficulties in this case being successfully overcome. The full significance of the royal

[1] Cf. the appendix 'On the Nationality of Schleswig' in C. A. Gosch, *Denmark and Germany since* 1815 (1862), p. 446.

[2] Caroline Amalia.

[3] Cf. vol. I, pp. 289 ff., *ante*. The converse expedient, suggested by Metternich, of abolishing the *lex regia* by an exercise of the royal authority which had given it validity, was of course out of the question. According to the *lex regia*, the heir to the Danish throne, after the Crown-prince Frederick (afterwards King Frederick VII), who had been twice divorced and was childless, and King Christian's younger brother Prince Ferdinand, who was likewise childless (he actually died in 1863), would, on the supposition that their sisters Princess Juliana of Hesse-Philippsthal and Landgravine Charlotte of Hesse-Cassel renounced their rights, be the son of the younger of the pair, Landgrave Frederick.

manifesto—the consummation of political by means of dynastic union—was self-evident; and the *agnati*, whose interests were imperilled by the patent, the Dukes of Augustenburg and Glücksburg, and the Grand-duke of Oldenburg, as well as the Estates of both duchies, recorded their protests. The Holstein Estates, as in duty bound, laid their complaint before the Frankfort Diet; where the explanation of the Danish envoy that there was no intention of interfering with the constitutional, legislative or administrative independence of the several parts of the monarchy was regarded as inadequate; but, though the Diet passed a resolution calling upon the Danish Government to respect the rights of the Confederation, the *agnati* and the Holstein Estates, it interfered no further except by reserving to itself its own eventual 'constitutional competence' (September 1846). The meeting of the Schleswig Estates, before collapsing (December) through the secession of Duke Christian August of Augustenburg and the majority in consequence of the refusal to the Estates by the Government of the right of petition, passed a vote in favour of the incorporation of the duchy in the Germanic Confederation.

The following year (1847) was, accordingly, a time of eager expectancy on both sides, with a view to the pursuance of the policy announced in the 'open letter,' and of the resistance certain to be offered to it. The personal changes in the administration of the duchies—above all the dismissal of Prince Frederick of Noer (the younger brother of Duke Christian August of Augustenburg and of Queen Caroline Amalia) from the offices of Governor-general and Commander-in-chief in Schleswig-Holstein, to which he had been appointed in 1842—had exercised no decisive effect; and in Schleswig the conflict of nationalities displayed more vehemence than ever in the elections for a new diet. King Christian VIII, however, had set his hopes upon a venture which, as he had persuaded himself, might reconcile to the

maintenance of the integrity of the entire monarchy even the Schleswig-Holstein enthusiasm for the indivisibility of the two duchies, and supply a surer guarantee than the goodwill of the Great Powers which he had been so long intent upon securing for his succession scheme. This was the design of a constutition whose Liberal breadth should satisfy both his Danish and his German subjects. To whatever extent King Christian VIII was presumably responsible for the draft which, as elaborated by State-councillor Bang, he early in January summoned the *Rigsraad* to discuss, his statesmanship, though he was both well-informed and able, was neither strong nor self-reliant enough for the scheme to have fared better in his hands than it did in those of his son, who, on the 28th of the same month, succeeded him on the throne. Frederick VII was conspicuously wanting in energy, and notoriously prone to self-indulgence; but he enjoyed a popularity to which his father had never attained with his Danish subjects, who liked to regard their sovereign as one of themselves.

The draft constitution left behind him by Christian VIII was published a few days after the accession of Frederick VII, who at the same time followed his father's advice by naming Count Charles von Moltke-Nütschau, a skilful man of affairs, Minister of State to carry through the scheme. It represents an attempt both sincere and conciliatory to settle the Schleswig-Holstein question and the future of the monarchy on the corporate state basis. Inspired, perhaps, by the example of the Prussian United Diet of 1847[1], the draft proposed to create a General Diet for the whole Danish monarchy, which was to consist of the same number of deputies chosen from the kingdom and from the duchies respectively; while by its side the Estates or representative bodies in each of the component parts of the monarchy

[1] Cf. vol. I, p. 341, *ante*.

were to continue to assemble. All laws or other measures that concerned the monarchy as a whole, including matters appertaining to taxation and financial administration, were to be dealt with by the General Diet; while business concerning either the kingdom or the duchies only was to be left to their own representative assemblies. Provision was made for the protection in Schleswig of both the German and the Danish language. The draft constitution was to be submitted to a committee of experts, composed of 18 elected representatives of the kingdom and the duchies, to whom the Crown proposed to add 16 nominees of its own.

At Copenhagen, the proposed gift of a constitution, devised on Liberal lines, could not fail to attract democratic sympathies; but the consideration shown to the duchies in the contemplated composition of the General Diet aroused resentment, and the insistence of the Eider-Danes on the incorporation of Schleswig, whatever might become of Holstein, speedily prevailed. In the duchies there was general mistrust of the proffered gift, and opinion was divided even as to the expediency of taking part in the election of the proposed experts. Soon, however, the constitution itself was as dead as its author. In the midst of these discussions came the news of the February revolution at Paris, which, as everywhere else, intensified public excitement. On March 18th, a meeting of delegates from the Estates of both the duchies was held at Rendsburg, where it was resolved, before adopting extreme measures, to send an address to the King, demanding a joint constitution for Schleswig-Holstein and the entrance of Schleswig into the Germanic Confederation. On the 21st the counterstroke was delivered at Copenhagen. On the previous day, as the result of an inflammatory speech delivered by Orla Lehmann, the leader of the Eider-Danes, a public petition had been presented to the King; and, in obedience to its demands, he now informed the *Rigsraad* that he had

resolved to effect the incorporation of Schleswig in the kingdom of Denmark. On the same day a new Ministry was appointed, which included Orla Lehmann. The Schleswig-Holstein deputation which had brought the Rendsburg address was sent home with a royal proclamation in its hands, announcing the impending incorporation of Schleswig, and the grant of a separate constitution to Holstein.

Revolution now responded to revolution. Already on the 20th, Duke Christian August of Augustenburg had taken his departure for Berlin, in order to ascertain how far the Prussian Government was prepared to support the wishes of the duchies and his own claims. They were in his name laid before King Frederick William IV, who—for it was the morrow of the Berlin insurrection—expressed himself in favour of the demands for union and independence, and for the maintenance of the Schleswig-Holstein succession in the male line. On his return, the wary claimant found that the movement in the duchies had passed beyond his guidance, and that a Provisional Government had been appointed, of which his younger brother, Prince Frederick of Noer, formed part. Without renouncing the authority of King Frederick VII as Duke of Schleswig-Holstein, Duke Christian August identified himself with this Government so far as to take up his residence at its seat, Rendsburg, and to declare himself in favour of resistance to the action of the sovereign while the latter was 'unfree.'

To the war of 1848–50 there is no necessity for returning here[1]. The part played in it by Prussia was not one entitling her either to the gratitude of the duchies or to the confidence of the supporters of what was regarded as a national cause in Germany at large. Troops were, at first, sent in aid of the Schleswig-Holsteiners by the Prussian Government, and followed by others despatched, at the instance of the *Vorparlament*, by the Confederation; but the invasion of

[1] Cf. vol. I, pp. 465–7; 519–21, *ante*.

Jutland was arrested by peace negotiations into which the Prussian Government had entered at the instance of the Russian. On August 26th, a truce was concluded with the Danes at Malmö. Before the National Assembly at Frankfort had been finally induced—not without the aid of the Duke of Augustenburg, who was anxious, at any cost, to avoid a rupture with Prussia—to approve this compact, the Provisional Government in the duchies had resigned, and its place had been taken by an administration carried on in the name of the reigning King-Duke and countenanced by the Danish Government. Hostilities, however, reopened with the close of the winter, and success attended the German campaign by both sea and land. But the Prussian Government had resolved to cease any cooperation in a struggle which was regarded with unconcealed disfavour by Russia and disapproved by Great Britain, besides being repugnant to the principles of the conservative party at Berlin, and little to the taste of King Frederick William IV himself. Thus, even before the defeat of General von Bonin at Fredericia (July 6th, 1849) negotiations had begun at Berlin, and, a few days later (July 10th), a truce and peace preliminaries had been concluded there. For the Schleswig-Holstein Government and Estates nothing remained but to assent to the withdrawal of the troops still under their control behind the Eider.

While Holstein nominally retained a Government of its own, Schleswig was now placed under an administration of three—a Dane, a Prussian, and a British official[1]; but the sequel was known to be only a matter of time. On July 2nd, 1850, Prussia concluded peace with Denmark, simply putting an end to any obligations undertaken by herself towards the duchies, and leaving them and the war in Denmark's hands. A separate agreement provided for the

[1] Colonel Hodges, our *chargé d'affaires* at Hamburg, of whose Danish sympathies there was no doubt.

evacuation of all but the southernmost part of Schleswig; and the duchy was during the winter occupied by Danish troops. In the resistance carried on during the year 1850 by the Schleswig-Holstein army under the command of General Freiherr Wilhelm von Willisen, a few Prussian officers, who like him had given up their Prussian commissions for the purpose, took part. But, before it finally broke down, the Prussian Government had signed the Olmütz punctation, by which it was agreed to set up an Austro-Prussian 'commission of pacification' in Holstein. In the meantime, the Schleswig-Holstein army was to be reduced—if necessary, by the use of force—to one-third of its existing total of more than 40,000 men, with a view to its subsequent entire disbandment. An Austrian force entered the duchy; the Germanic Confederation declared its wish to carry out the peace with Denmark; and, on January 11th, 1851, the Holstein Estates gave way. Their 'ducal' Government resigned its powers into the hands of the Commissioners; and the army was scattered to the winds. A few months more, and the *interim*, in its turn, was at an end, and the direct authority of the King-Duke was reestablished in the whole of his dominions.

Yet, notwithstanding the success which had ultimately attended the Danish Government in both war and negotiation, it was manifest that the lasting maintenance of the integrity of the monarchy depended on finding a solution of the constitutional problem which should satisfy its component parts and be accepted by the German Great Powers on their own behalf and on that of the Confederation. To the permanent establishment of a merely 'personal' union the temper of the Danish democracy would not allow the Crown to agree; was a federal settlement still possible which would to some extent meet the demands of the Eider-Danes and the public opinion which they controlled, while possessing that measure of fixity upon which Austria,

with Prussia in her wake and Russia in the background, was primarily intent? The new Danish Minister of Foreign Affairs, C. A. Bluhme, a statesman of much ability and considerable personal influence, made the attempt; and, on December 8th, 1851, a scheme or programme was transmitted to the Courts of Vienna and Berlin, of which the purport was that the Danish Government undertook to effect an organic and homogeneous union of the monarchy by legal and constitutional means, i.e. by consulting the Estates of the duchies of Schleswig and Holstein (and the Knights and landowners of Lauenburg) as well as the Danish *Rigsdag* at Copenhagen. As to Schleswig, the King repeated his promise to refrain from any steps towards its incorporation in Denmark; as to Holstein, on the other hand, he could not approve of a closer union between it and Schleswig than that which existed between either of the duchies and the kingdom. The Austrian and Prussian Governments, hereupon, signified their assent to these proposals, provided that the King of Denmark declared them to be binding upon himself, so that they might commend them for acceptance to the Germanic Confederation; and it was partly with the view of meeting this demand, and placing his undertakings on record, that King Frederick VII, on January 28th, 1852, his Ministry having been reconstructed under the presidency of Bluhme, issued a proclamation, on the explicit pledge in which the next, or penultimate, stage in the history of the Schleswig-Holstein question virtually turns. According to the design which it was now proposed to call into life, the existing constitution of the kingdom of Denmark was to be preserved intact, while the duchies (and Lauenburg) were to receive separate constitutions of their own, and their governments to be conducted by separate Ministers responsible to the sovereign only. In addition, however, there was to be established a constitution common to the monarchy at large, which would regulate the

treatment of matters of general concern, such as foreign affairs, war, navy and, in part, finance. The settlement of this constitution, and the discrimination between affairs of common and those of separate interest, was to be submitted to the existing Estates of the duchies. For the rest, care was to be taken that these Estates should, with regard to the affairs brought before them, not merely exercise a consultative voice, but possess the power of resolving. Holstein was to be governed by the restored Duke according to its own laws, which were not to be altered except in a constitutional way; and, as to Schleswig, the new constitution was to contain all provisions necessary for securing to both the Danish and the German nationalities respectively 'perfectly equal rights and powerful protection.' A note sent to Vienna and Berlin with copies of this manifesto expressed the King of Denmark's conviction, as based on a recent Austrian communication, that the two Governments were in agreement as to the intentions now declared by him, more especially with regard to the non-incorporation of Schleswig in the kingdom. The Frankfort Diet, on July 29th, following, placed on record its approval of Frederick VII's proclamation, and expressed its hope that he would govern his German dominions in the spirit which it displayed. So early as February, the Diet had recalled the Confederate troops from Holstein; and it seemed as if Bluhme's move in the game had not been made in vain, and the constitutional side of the question had for the present been laid to rest.

But there was another side to the problem which, with the accession of King Frederick VII, had once more become prominent and which was inseparable from any attempt to settle the future of the Danish monarchy on a permanent footing. The question of the order of succession to be followed on the extinction of the reigning male line of Christian I had played a considerable part in the recent war, and Duke

Christian August of Augustenburg had identified his claims to the succession in the duchies with their rising on behalf of their constitutional rights. On the other hand, Danish diplomacy had been active in promoting an international agreement, by which the integrity of the existing Danish monarchy should be maintained and the succession newly regulated. In August 1850, immediately after the Prussian peace with Denmark, the representatives of Great Britain, France, Russia and Sweden had signed a protocol in London, to which Austria acceded before the end of the month, which, besides pronouncing in favour of the integrity of the Danish monarchy, approved of the intention of the King of Denmark to prepare a new order of succession for recognition by the Powers. Now, after the proclamation of January 28th, 1852, had sought to safeguard the integrity of the monarchy by a common constitution, no time was to be lost in establishing this order of succession also. The motives inducing the European Powers to give their assent to the settlement which was actually effected by the new London Protocol of May 8th of this year, and by which, on the extinction of the reigning line, Prince Christian of Glücksburg and his descendants in the male line were recognised as next in the succession, cannot be discussed here. Tsar Nicholas, who up to 1850 had entertained the design of securing the acquisition of the entire Danish monarchy by the Hereditary Grand-duke Peter of Oldenburg, had in 1851 finally given up pressing the claims of Oldenburg, nor were they urged by his kinsman (who succeeded as Grand-duke in 1853) as applying to the duchies in their entirety. The Russian goodwill to the Glücksburg succession sufficed to incline the British Tory Cabinet, which was particularly desirous of avoiding renewed friction with Russia, to follow suit in this matter; nor was any opposition to be looked for from France. The real obstacles to a summary settlement lay elsewhere. Were the rights

of the Germanic Confederation to be ignored in the settlement of the succession to Holstein, and were the Augustenburg claims to be overriden in both duchies? The latter difficulty was the more pressing. From the Danish point of view, the share taken by the House of Augustenburg in the insurrectionary war had placed it out of court, if, indeed, it had not rendered the Duke and his brother liable to a charge of high treason. Moreover, their claims were in themselves not considered altogether flawless, and to those of their descendants further objections might be taken[1]. But the settlement was to be pacific, and the goodwill of the duchies was, if possible, to be conciliated. The pretensions of the eldest of the agnatic lines had been steadily upheld by Duke Christian August, in tenacity of will at least a fit representative of his fellow-countrymen; and he had gained their respect, if not their attachment, even before he and his brother had risked everything in the crisis of the fortunes of the duchies and their own. He stood at once for the cause of the legal right, thus commanding the sympathy of the German Princes, and for that of national aspirations. In Duke Ernest II of Coburg he had found a thoroughgoing supporter of his rights. King Frederick William IV of Prussia, to whom the cause of legitimacy never appealed in vain, had, from the first, shown himself alive to their strength; and the Duke, in his turn, had shrewdly taken every care to conciliate the King's goodwill. Nor was it without significance that Queen Victoria was strongly interested in the claims of which her husband's brother was the most conspicuous champion. Accordingly, the Danish Government arrived at the conclusion that the

[1] Cf. p. 52, *ante*. No further reference seems needed to the marriages of Duke Christian August and Prince Frederick of Noer, which, having been sanctioned by the King of Denmark as head of the whole House, were, according to the *lex loci*, not to be considered 'morganatic.'

Duke of Augustenburg had to be reckoned with, instead of his pretensions being contemptuously thrust aside. A long negotiation began even before the substance of the proposed London protocol was known to the Duke; and, after passing through several stages in which the chief part was played, with admirable tact[1], by Bismarck, then Prussian envoy at Frankfort, came to a close towards the end of April—just in time for the signing of that instrument.

The Duke was paid a sum variously reckoned at two millions and a quarter and two millions and a half of Prussian dollars (£340,000 or 375,000) for the surrender to the Danish Crown of the whole of his landed possessions in Schleswig, undertaking in return to acquire no further landed property in the duchy and at no time to take up his residence within the Danish monarchy; while promising, for himself and for his family, to do nothing against the proposed regulation of the succession and organisation of the Danish dominions.

Under the angry light of later events, this transaction was subjected to severe censure as representing, in a word, the sale of his rights and those of his House by the Duke of Augustenburg. In point of fact, whatever may be thought of the pecuniary bargain he made, he had found himself face to face with the choice between it and the loss of all his estates. The alternative he chose was not heroic; but it was not dishonest. For himself, he henceforth abstained from any political action; his two sons, who were of age and therefore did not legally belong to his 'family,' his promise was not intended to bind[2]. Whether they would have done better to protest at once is a different question; but there is evidence to show that their father was not of opinion

[1] See, however, Oncken, *Rudolf von Bennigsen*, vol. I, p. 629.

[2] Their assent was actually asked and given with regard to a different transaction, which had reference to the setting-up of an entailed estate for the family in Prussia.

that he was renouncing their rights; and that in truth he was, properly speaking, renouncing nothing but his Schleswig estates[1].

The London Protocol of May 8th, 1852, in which the Great Powers and Sweden pronounced the integrity of the Danish monarchy a European necessity, and gave practical expression to this conviction by recognising the succession in the whole monarchy of Prince Christian of Glücksburg and his descendants in the male line, had neither in form nor in substance the character of a European guarantee. As a measure of policy, it gave no satisfaction in Denmark, where the Eider-Danes' hopes of the simple absorption of Schleswig, or South Jutland, as they were fain to call it, had been disappointed—not to speak of the wider aspirations for a general Scandinavian union—and where the rule of a Prince of German birth over a federation of constitutionally governed states was not regarded as a satisfactory prospect. Nor, on the other hand, was the protocol liked in Germany, drawn up as it had been with complete disregard of the Federal Diet, the only existing Federal organ, and in defiance of the desires of the secondary and petty states and their dynasties[2]. But no reopening of the question between the two German Great Powers was at this time possible; and the Danish Government waited for more than a year, before, on July 31st, 1853, it promulgated the new order of succession as a law valid for the entire monarchy. It was not laid before the Estates of the duchies; and the question as to their competence to give or refuse their assent to it remained unraised. The future must take care of itself; meanwhile, it would be seen how the Danish Government proposed to redeem the promises

[1] Gebauer, *Christian August*, p. 330.

[2] It was, however, afterwards approved by Electoral Hesse, Hanover, Saxony and Württemberg. K. Klüpfel, *Geschichte der deutschen Einheitsbestrebungen*, etc., vol. I (1872), p. 318.

by which it had received the assent of the German Great Powers—for the Confederation had been left out of the bargain—to the unguaranteed recognition of the integrity of its dominions.

In view of the heavy penalty which Denmark had to pay for her proceedings in the next decade, and of the excuse afforded to her action by the impotence of German national policy in this period, and the consequent disregard of its claims by the other Powers, there is no necessity for dwelling on the results of a treaty, of which, if of any, it might be asserted that it was made only to be broken. Suffice it therefore to say, as to the constitutional side of the transaction, that in 1852 the drafts of separate constitutions prepared by the Danish Government for Schleswig and Holstein were submitted to the Estates of the respective duchies with a direction not to consider the relations between the different parts of the monarchy, but only those paragraphs which referred to the future composition of the several Estates themselves and to their competence to regulate the affairs of the duchy represented by them. When, in consequence, the Holstein Estates refused their assent to the draft submitted to them, and the Schleswig Estates approved that laid before them only subject to important modifications, the King was advised to impose (*octroyer*) the new separate constitutions by his own authority; and this he proceeded to do—in Schleswig in February, and in Holstein in June 1854—without regarding either the disapproval with which the draft proposals had met in the Holstein, or the amendments which had been adopted in the sister, duchy. In addition to the two separate constitutions, and in connexion with them, a constitution for the common affairs of the monarchy was imposed (July), without being submitted to the representative bodies of its component parts; but, as this corporate constitution never came into operation, its provisions need

not be enumerated here. It failed to satisfy popular feeling at Copenhagen; and before long, the Minister who was chiefly responsible for it, A. S. Oersted, was overthrown and a new Ministry was formed by L. N. von Schele, a Holstein landowner and official, who was prepared to administer his native duchy (of which he was appointed special Minister) in accordance with the requirements of the Danish democracy. He was primarily responsible for the new constitution for the common affairs of the monarchy, which in October 1855 took the place of that of the previous year, and which forms the definitive attempt to settle the constitutional system of the monarchy in the sense of Danish predominance. Its most conspicuous feature was the establishment of a council of state (*Rigsraad*) of not less than 80 members, of whom 20 were to be nominated by the King and 30 by the representative bodies of the kingdom and duchies, for different periods of years, while 30 were to be elected by a direct popular vote. Of the King's nominees 12 were to be taken from Denmark, and 8 from Schleswig, Holstein and Lauenburg; of the delegates of representative bodies 18 were to be sent by the Danish diet and 12 by the Estates of the duchies; of the directly elected, 17 were to be chosen in Denmark and 13 in the rest of the monarchy.

Without entering into the details of an electoral law which followed, and the immediate object of which was to render the assurance of a Danish ascendancy still more sure[1], we cannot feel surprised at the results of legislation so transparent in its purpose. Partly as the result of abstention in the duchies, the first elections to the new *Rigsraad* resulted in an overwhelming Danish majority; and a motion made there by the influential Holsteiner

[1] Part of this law afterwards acquired a certain celebrity, as designed to protect the rights of minorities—where any such existed.

Freiherr Karl von Scheel-Plessen and his friends, declaring the new corporate constitution invalid till it should have been submitted to the Estates of the duchies, found not more than fourteen supporters. The Holstein Estates, hereupon, attempted judicial proceedings against the obnoxious author of the new constitution; but the Supreme Court declared itself incompetent in the matter. Though, in April 1857, Schele withdrew from office, being succeeded as head of the Ministry by his colleague C. C. Hall, the constitutional question made no progress in his more supple hands, and soon led to the intervention of the Germanic Diet.

Meanwhile, the grievances which came home directly to the populations of the duchies—held fast as these were by the roots (*wurzelfest*)[1] to their inherited institutions—continued to add fuel to the flame of mutual jealousy and illwill. These grievances were of various kinds, and some of them appealed very strongly to the sympathetic indignation of the German people at large[2]. Of a more special kind were those referring to the application of the income derived from the domain lands in the duchies to purposes common to the monarchy as a whole, and, on the other hand, to the exclusion of Schleswig and Holstein from a share in the profits accruing to the kingdom from the redemption of the Sound dues. There were other matters, more or less petty, concerning customs, coinage and circulation of

[1] An expression of Theodor Storm's, who was himself about this time driven into exile.

[2] It must not be forgotten that this age was marked by a collision of nationalities in Europe at large, and that the conflict which declared itself in Schleswig might in other circumstances have blazed forth on the opposite shores of the Baltic. Early in 1862, a movement arose in the Baltic provinces of Russia for the establishment of a united diet of these lands in self-defence against early Panslavistic schemes; but the conditions of the problem were very different here, and it was not allowed to become a German question. (Cf. *Aus dem Leben T. von Bernhardi's*, vol. IV, pp. 249 ff.)

paper-money. But the whole administrative system was pervaded by an attempt on the part of the Government to take every advantage of its position; both the duchies were filled with Danish officials, and in every sphere of professional life, judicial and financial as well as clerical and educational, Germans were forced to give way to Danes more especially by the process of leaving unconfirmed, contrary to custom, appointments made in the previous reign. In the same way, concessions for printing and publishing were withdrawn; and, while at Copenhagen, since 1848, journalistic liberty had been allowed to grow into extreme licence, the duchies were as a matter of fact not allowed to have a press of their own, and were unable to vent their grievances except through the journals of German states. The right of assemblage and public discussion was similarly cut off. In addition to these and other abuses of power which were felt in both duchies, and others, such as those affecting the University of Kiel, which applied particularly to Holstein, there was the old trouble of the repression of the German language in Schleswig. The responsibility for such a persecution is never easy to bring home to an offending Government; but the processes in this instance were gross and palpable, and the whole design is probably not misrepresented by the statement that it amounted to a deliberate attempt to facilitate the incorporation of Schleswig in Denmark by forcing the use of the Danish tongue in school and in church upon a population of which far the larger half spoke German as their native language[1]. Nor was the system merely applied in localities where the nationalities were mixed; but on many exclusively

[1] According to Mr W. R. Prior, *North Sleswick under Prussian Rule*, 1864–1914 (Oxford, 1914), a census taken in the duchy in 1855 had shown that out of a population of about 400,000 there were 190,000 who spoke German only, 150,000 who spoke Danish only, while the remainder were bilingual. We may leave aside, as two-

German parishes in Angeln and elsewhere Danish clergymen were forced, and the Danish language alone was used there in both churches and schools[1].

As against this condition of things, the German Great Powers long hesitated in resolving upon a decided line of action, and this chiefly because they had not agreed upon a common policy. When, in 1856, the Holstein Estates consulted the Prussian Government as to the expediency of protesting at the Diet, Bismarck, who as Prussian envoy at Frankfort was consulted on the subject by Manteuffel, recommended caution and, above all, abstinence from any action without the approval of Austria. Thus, the two Powers at first contented themselves with diplomatic representations at Copenhagen, which appealed to the promises of 1852; and it was not till February 1858 that they countenanced the passing of a resolution by the Diet, refusing to recognise the corporate constitution of 1855 as valid for Holstein and Lauenburg, and calling upon the Danish Government to declare its intentions as to the promises of 1852. When the Danish Government replied that the common constitution of the Danish monarchy, and consequently the place of Holstein in it, was no concern of the Confederation, Bismarck was ordered by the Regent to bring about a resolution of the Diet threatening Federal execution. This was passed (July); and, on reflexion, the Danish Government took up the logical position (November 6th, 1858) of issuing a royal patent abrogating the common constitution so far as it affected Holstein and Lauenburg, and summoned the Holstein Estates to meet at Itzehoe in order to discuss the situation. They, in their turn, persisted in their opposition

edged, the argument that the Danish spoken in North-Schleswig—the 'ravens' Danish' as it was called—was very different from that of Copenhagen.

[1] This applied to 24 Angeln parishes with 40,000 German inhabitants.

to the treatment of the principle of a common constitution adopted by the Danish Government, and prepared, instead (March 11th, 1859), a federal scheme of their own, which provided that no constitutional alterations concerning the whole monarchy should at any time take place without the consent of the four separate legislatures (Denmark, Schleswig, Holstein and Lauenburg). It is noticeable, as showing how the question of the succession was bound up with that of constitution, that the Holstein Estates took occasion to protest expressly against the law of July 31st, 1853, which newly regulated the succession in the monarchy, without having been previously approved by the representative bodies in the duchies.

Since the Danish Government refused to agree to the counter-suggestions of the Holstein Estates, the only way out of the deadlock was a temporary arrangement; and this was favoured by the absorbing interest taken by the German Powers at this time in Italian affairs. On September the 23rd, 1859, the *Rigsraad* at Copenhagen issued a *provisorium*, or interim constitution, for the duchy of Holstein, which granted a slight increase of the financial powers previously conceded to the Estates of the duchy, but stopped far short of the equality of functions they had demanded. And, on November the 2nd, the Danish envoy at the Frankfort Diet promised that a conference should be summoned between deputies from the Holstein Estates and from the *Rigsraad*, in equal numbers, to settle a definitive scheme as to the treatment of the common affairs of the monarchy, in lieu of the corporate constitution abrogated, so far as Holstein was concerned, on October 2nd, 1855.

The *provisorium* was too much like a leaf out of the Germanic Confederation's own book to lead to any precipitate interference of that body on behalf of the duchy whose rights it was under the obligation of protecting. On March 8th, 1860, the Diet resolved further to delay Federal execution, unless the Danish Government should

promulgate any law or budget dealing with the common affairs of the monarchy without approval by the Holstein Estates; but, when the Danish budget was published without such approval in July 1860, nothing further was done at Frankfort. On the other hand, the dispute between the Holstein Estates and the Copenhagen Government became more embittered; and, in deference to British representations more especially, Hall, the very capable head of the Danish Ministry, was at last found willing to enter into a diplomatic discussion of the situation with the German Great Powers.

Towards the close of 1861, as has been seen[1], the German policy of Austria was both to be on good terms with Prussia and to take advantage of her internal difficulties; and nothing therefore could have suited the Austrian Government better than to play a prominent part in the Schleswig-Holstein question, as to which it had hitherto been well-content to remain in the background. Rechberg's memorandum in reply to Hall, dated August 26th, 1862, was therefore decided in tone. It protested against the continued validity of the common constitution for Schleswig as obviously aiming at the incorporation of the duchy in Denmark, and thus amounting to an open violation of the promises of 1852. Why, now that the integrity of the monarchy and the regulation of the succession had been secured, should not the historic union of the two duchies be restored, and an end be made of the whole strife?

It was at this point in the history of the Schleswig-Holstein difficulty that, to the surprise of both sides in the quarrel, a way out of it was suggested by the British Foreign Secretary, Lord Russell. In a sense, nothing could be altogether unexpected that proceeded from this particular quarter; and the British Government had since 1857 been in possession of full information as to the state of

[1] p. 67, *ante*.

things in the duchies, although it had been judged expedient to withhold this information from Parliament and the public[1]. Lord Russell, however, based his views on knowledge which he had the best opportunity of amplifying when in attendance on Queen Victoria during her visit in the autumn of this year to Coburg, the centre of the Schleswig-Holstein movement in Germany[2]. Lord Russell perceived that the common constitution of 1855, having never been approved by either of the two duchies, could have no validity in either of them. He further perceived that, in 1852, Denmark had promised not to incorporate Schleswig and to protect the rights of the German part of its population. Inasmuch as there could be no supervision of the maintenance of these rights by the Germanic Confederation, the only way remaining seemed to Lord Russell to be the grant of perfect autonomy to Schleswig, which left the decision of all matters proper to the duchy (including the language to be used in churches and schools) to its own representative body[3], and at the same time implied the dissolution of the old organic connexion with Holstein. As to the common constitution, since the simultaneous discussion of every law or budget by three (or, with Lauenburg, four) representative bodies was obviously impracticable, Lord Russell suggested, as a compromise, a normal budget, to be fixed every ten years

[1] See the letter to Manteuffel from Dr von Quehl, Prussian Consul-general at Copenhagen, as to the substance of Consul-general Ward's report of 1857 in Manteuffel's *Denkwürdigkeiten*, vol. III, pp. 225–6.

[2] Sir Robert Morier, who attended Lord Russell as private secretary at Coburg, regarded himself as 'the moral author' of the famous dispatch of September 24th, 1862. As to this, and Morier's explanatory pamphlet of the following year, see his *Memoirs and Letters*, vol. I (1911), chapters XV and XVI.

[3] This characteristic suggestion had been made by Lord John Russell so early as August 1860. See S. Walpole, *Life of Lord John Russell* (1891), vol. II, p. 388.

by these assemblies and applied by a council of state, composed of Danes and Germans in equal numbers.

These proposals—for diplomacy has its moments of *naïveté*, and the main objection to Lord Russell's scheme lay in its ignoring both what Denmark wanted and what to the duchies was the substance and the symbol of their resistance—were at once approved in Petersburg, and at Berlin (where Bismarck had just taken office) were still more decisively accepted as a suitable basis for a settlement. But the courage of the Danes was equal to withstanding this appeal to the pacific desires of Europe, which seemed so fair and was yet so fallacious; and, in a series of dispatches, Hall asserted the right of Denmark to settle her own affairs, and to maintain the connexion of Schleswig, as a Danish land, with the monarchy. Austria's earlier suggestion of a union of the duchies was emphatically declined. On January 21st, 1863, the *Landsthing* voted an address to the King demanding a definitive constitution for Denmark and Schleswig—i.e. the incorporation of the duchy in the kingdom; and, on March 30th following, there appeared the royal patent which, while declaring the necessity of settling the constitution of the monarchy 'so far as possible' in accordance with the demands of the Germanic Confederation, promulgated a new constitution for Holstein. This constitution practically excluded Holstein from representation in the *Rigsraad*, leaving Schleswig to her fate under its control. The financial arrangements which accompanied these provisions were calculated to place a heavy additional burden (of more than 2 million dollars) upon the duchies. With the patent of March 30th, 1863, if it were allowed to remain valid, a new era of Eider-Danism had been set on foot, while Lord Russell's project of conciliation had gone the way of all previous compromises.

The issue of the Danish patent of March 30th, 1863—of

this there could be no doubt—made it necessary for Austria to take speedy action, unless she was prepared to let Prussia proceed by herself; while the far-sighted statesman now in charge of Prussian affairs modified the attitude of caution which he had hitherto observed. The patent had, in direct contravention of the promises of 1852, been promulgated without consulting the Holstein Estates, and, though it enlarged their powers, entailed serious financial losses upon the duchy. Hence, a decree of Federal execution on the part of the Frankfort Diet seemed no longer avoidable, and, in answer to Rechberg's enquiry, the Prussian Government expressed itself in favour of proposing to the Diet the execution required.

But to Germany at large those diplomatic provisions seemed all too slow. The *Nationalverein* was, indeed, chiefly preoccupied at this time with the progress of the parliamentary conflict in Prussia, which had risen to an unprecedented degree of vehemence, while the attention of political controversialists was, also, diverted by the Austrian scheme of Federal reform. But some of the lesser states sought to hasten the action of the Great Powers; and, while Hanover and Baden made energetic declarations to the Diet, Oldenburg (more directly interested) brought forward a motion there, purporting that, since Denmark had broken the Treaties of 1852, the ancient rights of the duchies should be restored. Though, on April 17th, Bismarck disdainfully opposed a motion to the same effect in the Prussian Chamber, declaring that if the Government considered war with Denmark necessary, it would be declared with or without the Chamber's approval, the Grand-duke pressed his motion in the Diet. In the end, a resolution was passed there, offering the Danish Government a term of six months within which to withdraw the patent of March the 30th, and to open negotiations for a new common constitution on the basis of the settlement of 1852 or of

the British mediatory proposals of 1862. At the same time, deliberations continued as to the composition of the force which would be required for the Federal execution, in the event of a Danish refusal.

In the menacing aspect which matters had at last assumed, the courage of the Danes was kept up by a visit of the King of Sweden to the Danish Court, and by the bluster—for it can hardly be described otherwise—of Lord Palmerston in the House of Commons. Lord Russell's attempt to understand the Schleswig-Holstein question had not been largely imitated in this country; and T. von Bernhardi's visit, made for the purpose of enlightening English public opinion, began too late and was conducted on too restricted a scale[1]. On August 26th, the Danish answer arrived at Frankfort. It refused the withdrawal of the March patent and treated the sending of a Federal execution as a *casus belli*. The *Fürstentag* was sitting at the time; and never had it seemed more expedient that Austria should espouse a cause dear to the mind and heart of the German nation. Beust was at hand with a proposal that the Congress of Princes should be asked to make a suitable reply to the provocation contained in the Danish answer; but Rechberg thought that Prussia—which had declined attending the Congress—should first be consulted[2]. So it was left to the Diet to reply, and, a further note of defiance having been sounded at Copenhagen by the announcement of a new constitution for Denmark and Schleswig (September 28th), a vote approving the recommendation of Federal execution, made by the Committees appointed on the subject, was, all but unanimously, passed

[1] He crossed quite at the close of the year. See *Aus dem Leben*, vol. v, p. 285. He was then in the Augustenburg interest, and believed that Bismarck meant ultimately to restore the duchies to Denmark.

[2] *Memoirs of Count Beust* (Engl. tr.), vol. I, pp. 231–2.

at Frankfort (October 1st). The execution, it may be well to remember, was to be against King Christian IX as Duke of Holstein, and he was thus to be forced to reconsider constitutional changes by which he had jeopardised the future of the duchy. Lord Russell's offer of mediation had fallen through, not, it must be allowed, by Bismarck's fault, but through the unwillingness of the Danish Government to shut itself up to this course except in the case of extremity[1]. The British Foreign Secretary's remonstrance to the Diet at the last moment was waved aside.

Bismarck, then, of whose diplomacy rashness at no time actually formed part, was still unwilling to venture on the final throw, and to provoke the illwill of the Western Powers, already aroused against Prussia's ally Russia, at a time when the *Fürstentag* policy of Austria had inevitably caused tension between her and Prussia herself. He therefore continued to maintain a conciliatory attitude towards Denmark; and here it was only natural that he should be met by some pacific tendencies. They found an influential representative in Baron von Blixen-Finecke, a large Jutland landowner, brother-in-law to Prince Christian of Glücksburg, the heir to the throne under the new law of succession. King Frederick VII himself was understood to be in favour of a middle course. But when, with the aid of Blixen-Finecke and of Sir Andrew Buchanan, British ambassador-extraordinary at Berlin, communications with a view to averting Federal execution by concessions had been opened with the Danish Government, it was not to be moved from its purpose of carrying out the incorporation of Schleswig before taking any steps towards the withdrawal of the obnoxious March patent. Thus, though not without difficulty, the necessary two-thirds' majority was kept up in the *Rigsraad* for the acceptance of the new constitution for Schleswig and Denmark promised by the King, which signified the

[1] See S. Walpole, *Life of Lord John Russell*, vol. II, pp. 396–7.

breaking-up of the compact of 1852, on which the maintenance of the integrity of the monarchy depended. Neither Great Britain nor even Sweden could support so defiant a policy; but Hall and the Eider-Danes, encouraged by what they interpreted as the fears of Prussia, stood firm, and on November 13th the new constitution was passed in the *Rigsraad* by 40 against 16 votes. On the same day, Hall repaired to Glücksburg, in order to secure the signature of Frederick VII to the document. He found the King dangerously ill, though not without moments of consciousness and intelligence. In one of these, the constitution was submitted to him for his signature; but he refused, saying that he left this business to his successor. On November 15th, 1863, King Frederick VII died. Prince Ferdinand, the King's uncle and heir-presumptive, had predeceased him in the previous July. The time had come, as Bishop Monrad writes in his journal, for bombs to burst[1].

A few days before this, a 'bomb,' of which the destination could not be stated with certainty, had been thrown by a skilful hand into the midst of the European family of nations. On November 5th, Napoleon III had opened his legislature with a speech announcing that, 'inasmuch as the Treaties of 1815 had ceased to exist, nothing could be more reasonable than to summon the Powers of Europe to a Congress which should form a supreme tribunal for the decision of all doubtful questions.' His invitations to such a Congress, as has been seen, had been issued on the previous day. Undoubtedly, the meeting, could it have taken place, would have overtrumped the gathering of Princes at Frankfort; but neither as to the Danish difficulty, nor as to German affairs at large, could there be any wish on the part of Austria and Prussia to discuss the situation with any such tribunal. That Austria should shrink from taking part in a revision of the Treaties of 1815 was a matter of

[1] *Deltagelse i Begivenhederne* 1864 (1914), p. 47.

course; in the meantime, the implied menace of the French announcement could not but incline her to maintain as good an understanding as possible with Prussia, who had no corresponding interest in those Treaties, and with whom Napoleon III continued to show himself disposed to remain on friendly terms.

The first, and unavoidable, consequence of the adoption of the new constitution by the Danish *Rigsraad* and of the death of King Frederick VII was not long in announcing itself. On November 16th Prince Christian of Glücksburg was proclaimed at Copenhagen as King Christian IX; and, for the present, the Eider-Dane Ministry under Hall remained in office as a matter of course. But, on the same day, an open letter of Duke Frederick (hitherto Hereditary Prince) of Augustenburg announced that, by virtue of his hereditary right as the first, in order of sequence, of the *agnati*, Duke Christian August having abdicated his rights in his elder son's favour, he had assumed the government of Schleswig-Holstein as Duke Frederick VIII, and promised to maintain the constitution of the duchies and the rights of his subjects. He appealed at the same time to the Germanic Confederation to protect the lawful order of succession in the duchies.

No purpose would be served at this point by once more discussing the Augustenburg claims, and their defects; since before long, they were espoused, for better or worse, not only by the large majority of the population of the duchies, but, it is not too much to say, by Germany at large[1]. Prince Frederick of Sonderburg-Augustenburg, like

[1] The legal faculties of not less than sixteen German universities are stated to have expressed themselves in favour of these claims. A different decision was that of the Crown-syndicate consulted by the Prussian Government in 1865; which body consisted of eighteen leading legal authorities, with few exceptions independent of the Crown. According to their opinion, to which we shall have to

his brother Prince Christian, who devotedly seconded his efforts, was a man of high honour and a sense of duty which he obeyed implicitly, whether he thought it bade him stand forward or hold his peace. After his father had redeemed his Schleswig estates by undertaking that nothing should be done by himself or his family against the new order of succession in the Danish monarchy, the brothers, who, being of age, had a right to act for themselves, had by Duke Christian August's wish refrained from any protest, until, in January 1859, the elder put forth a reservation of his rights, which met with little attention. For the rest, the appeal or proclamation of Duke Frederick VIII, as he now styled himself, made no mention of any doubts as to his claims to the succession; and he at once betook himself to Gotha, the residence of his staunchest friend among the German Princes. Here it was that, at this critical time (November 1863), he was visited by T. von Bernhardi, who agreed to lend his persuasive pen for an appeal to the goodwill of Napoleon III, and who then passed on to England, to gain

return in a different connexion, the Augustenburg claims by the London Protocol of 1852 became inferior to those of King Christian IX and his male descendants. And by eleven to seven (one of the minority, however, being the President, Professor Heffter), the Syndics decided that, being bound for all time by his father's promise, the present Duke of Augustenburg had lost his claim to the succession to the duchies. See Sybel, vol. IV, pp. 101 ff. It must be remembered that Duke Christian August (of Schleswig-Holstein-Sonderburg) had in 1852 not formally renounced even his own claims to the succession (of Schleswig-Holstein), but only promised to undertake nothing against the present settlement. He now renounced or abdicated the claims themselves. Since the title of his elder son Frederick, as Duke of Schleswig-Holstein, was never recognised by the Great Powers, they continued to style him Hereditary Prince, the title by which he had hitherto been called, the younger members of the family being styled Princes, though legally Dukes. It would, however, be pedantry not to call him Duke in the text, though his father survived till 1869.

support for it there[1]. A more important visitor was Bennigsen, the president of the *Nationalverein*, who hereupon drew up an eloquent appeal to the German nation and its princes, on the broadest of bases, to stand by the right[2]. The Duke of Coburg lent Duke Frederick the aid of two Schleswig-Holsteiners, who had entered into his own service on having to quit the duchies—Karl Samwer, who ultimately became the historian of the whole movement, and the Councillor of State, K. P. Francke, than whom no prince or pretender ever had more devoted and capable agents and adherents. To Samwer Duke Frederick's 'foreign' relations, and to Francke his financial affairs were specially committed. Colonel du Plat, who in 1848 had exchanged the Danish for the Schleswig-Holstein service, acted as military adviser to the Duke, who wished his 'subjects' to have a share in their own liberation.

As yet, however, the uncertainty of the situation was great. In Schleswig, where since 1852 the Augustenburgs had become little more than the shadow of a name, the hopes of the German part of the population rested mainly on the Prince whom Denmark and the Powers had chosen as successor to the throne, and whose kindly nature and German descent seemed full of promise, not to speak of his family connexion (his eldest daughter Princess Alexandra had in March, 1863, been married to the Prince of Wales). With Holstein, on the other hand, Duke Christian August had taken care to remain in touch; and immediately after the death of King Frederick VII a 'committee of action' was set up just across the border at Hamburg, which in journals and pamphlets reiterated the cry 'Away from Denmark, under the guidance of our hereditary duke[3].'

[1] Cf. p. 133, note 1, *ante*, and see *Aus dem Leben*, vol. v, pp. 175 ff. For a characterisation of Samwer and Francke see *Reminiscences of Sir Joseph Crowe* (1895), pp. 404 ff.

[2] See Oncken, *Rudolf von Bennigsen*, vol. I, pp. 623–4.

[3] Among these pamphleteers were H. von Treitschke, L. K.

At a meeting of 'men of confidence' from both duchies held at Kiel on November 16th, the Schleswigers still hesitated about voting with the Holsteiners for Augustenburg and the expulsion of all Danish officials, when news from Copenhagen put an end to all doubt.

It was the action of King Christian IX of Denmark which was to prove decisive—though no sovereign could ever have been more desirous of postponing a decision. On November 18th he signed the new constitution—whether in obedience to Ministerial, mob, or family pressure it matters little; for there can be little doubt that his throne—perhaps more than his throne—was in danger if he refused, whereas for the moment there could be no fear of armed resistance in the duchies, where 30,000 Danish troops were quartered to overawe an unarmed population.

The moral effect of the King's, in the circumstances scarcely avoidable, decision was extraordinary. The issue had all at once (though, of course, the suddenness was only apparent) become broad and clear. Through the length and breadth of Germany there seemed no thought of any result but the severance of both duchies from the Danish monarchy, or of any way of bringing this about except by establishing in them the Augustenburg succession. Governments and legislatures vied with one another in giving expression to the popular enthusiasm. The Baden Government was first in the race with an authorisation to its envoy (Mohl) to accept powers as representative at the Diet of Duke Frederick of Schleswig-Holstein, and to protest there against any infraction of his rights (November 16th). On the following day Oldenburg protested against the succession of Christian IX in the duchies. To this point of view Grand-duke Peter consistently adhered; on the other hand, he considered his own claims better than

Aegidi and Konstantin Rössler. Cf. Gebauer, *Herzog Friedrich VIII, Herzog von Schleswig-Holstein* (1912), p. 66.

the Augustenburg, but promised, and fulfilled his promise, not to raise the former till after matters had been settled with Denmark[1]. On November 18th, the legislative body of the city of Frankfort moved its Senate to recognise Duke Frederick VIII of Schleswig-Holstein; and on the following day he was formally recognised by his faithful friend the Duke of Coburg-Gotha. Nor were the representative bodies of the Great Powers far behindhand. An interpellation on the subject at Vienna on November 20th was followed on the 23rd by motions for the recognition of the Duke from the Liberal side of the Chamber at Berlin. Here, as will be seen, there was no hurry; but, in the Second Saxon Chamber, Beust announced, on November 24th, that the Government would propose at the Frankfort Diet that admission should be refused to the envoy of the King of Denmark as Duke of Holstein, and that an augmented Federal force should be sent into that duchy till the question of the legal succession should have been decided by the Government. The Hesse-Darmstadt and the Württemberg Government and Chambers followed suit, and an endless number of associations, assemblies and committees joined in, the *Nationalverein* once more coming to the front with its proffered homage; subscription-lists were opened, and the formation of armed bodies of volunteers was talked of. The unanimity of all classes and parties was unexampled, and comprehended everybody except social democrats and republicans, who could not bring themselves, even by joining in so general a burst of enthusiasm, to imply that they put their trust in princes[2].

[1] See below as to the use made of these claims by Bismarck, and their definitive abandonment by Grand-duke Peter; and cf. H. Oncken, *Grossherzog Peter von Oldenburg*, in *Historisch-politische Aufsätze und Reden* (1914), vol. II, pp. 68 ff.

[2] Sybel's admirable account is followed in the above; but the present writer well remembers one of the most striking outbursts of national feeling it has ever been his lot to witness.

Neither Rechberg nor Bismarck could mistake the fact that King Christian IX's acceptance of the obnoxious constitution had advanced the quarrel with Denmark into a new stage, of which the issue might prove to be the severance of the duchies from the Danish monarchy. The Prussian Minister, to whom the Austrian at the present moment looked for his cue, had resolved, instead of defying the non-German Great Powers at once, to leave the onus of provoking the conflict with the Danish King, and, instead of tearing up the Treaty of 1852, to demand at present nothing beyond the revocation of the new constitution. Should war break out, all previous settlements with the Danish Government would lapse; in the meantime, the future of the duchies (which the King of Prussia at present showed no desire to annex) must be held over, and no new petty state should be created in the Germanic Confederation, without a previous reform of the Federal constitution at large. Rechberg, in the first instance, was content to follow the Prussian initiative; and the envoys of the two Great Powers at Frankfort joined in urging upon the Diet the continuation of the Federal execution against Holstein, and a protest against the new constitution accepted by the King of Denmark. The date of its actual introduction had been fixed for January 1st, 1864, and Rechberg easily induced Bismarck to leave Denmark time till then to furnish the *casus belli*.

But the Diet, which for once in its history, felt that it had the nation at its back, was not to be persuaded. The 'third Germany' was this time, as the phrase runs, 'out for action'; and the declaration of von der Pfordten was widely applauded, that there could no longer be any question of pressing either execution or withdrawal of the constitution upon Christian IX, as if he had been acknowledged Duke of Holstein and amenable to the demands of the Diet. And, on November 28th, the Diet emphasised this view by a vote, on which the two Great Powers found

themselves in a minority of two against fourteen, suspending for the present the vote of King Christian's envoy for Holstein-Lauenburg, and thus, though not reaching a definitive resolution, declining to accept the Austro-Prussian view of the continued validity of the Treaty of 1852. The supporters of the Augustenburg claim were encouraged to raise their demands; and Roggenbach presciently insisted that the duchies should be occupied as a security for the claims of their lawful Duke.

Bismarck's line of policy could not but benefit by the obstinacy of Denmark and the wrath of the partisans of Augustenburg; and on December 1st he made a speech to the Second Chamber at Berlin explaining the line of action of the Prussian Government, and putting the whole case of the German Powers in a nutshell. It was the first full revelation of his political genius[1]; but a revelation still very little understood. The Prussian Government, the Minister declared, still adhered to the Protocol—but on condition that Denmark adhered to the obligations which formed part of the compact. Should Denmark renounce these obligations, the Prussian Government must reserve to itself the right of renouncing the London Treaty, without referring the matter to the Germanic Confederation or entering into further declarations concerning it. The speech ended with a statement of the military measures and the consequent financial demands which would become necessary. After an agitated two days' debate, the Chamber by a majority of 231 against 63 votes, resolved that the recognition of Duke Frederick VIII by all the states of the Confederation was indispensable, together with an effective support of his assertion of his rights.

If the vote of the Prussian Chamber exercised any

[1] See E. Ollivier, *L'Empire Libéral*, vol. VII, p. 36, in a section of the work singularly lucid and impartial, though perhaps not quite fair to Duke Frederick.

effect at all, it was to weaken the inclination of King William I to do what was in his power for the Augustenburgs, and to increase the willingness of Rechberg to follow the lead of so prudent an ally. In opposition to the Hesse-Darmstadt motion at Frankfort for the occupation of Holstein 'in order to protect all rights,' the Great Powers, on December 7th, carried, though only by the narrow majority of eight to seven, a vote requiring that the execution should proceed with all due speed. By desire of the Austrian envoy, a clause was added providing that this motion should be without prejudice to any action with regard to the succession within the competence of the Diet; but, even so, the result was a grievous disappointment to those who had intended to bring about an immediate separation of the duchies from the Danish monarchy.

However, the Federal execution against Christian IX as Duke of Holstein, obliging him to carry out the resolutions passed by the Diet in 1860 (March) and 1863 (October) as to the constitutional treatment of the duchies, was now actually decreed; and the Military Commission (in which Moltke was the Prussian Commissioner) brought up its revised recommendations, which were at once accepted by the Governments concerned. 6000 Saxons and the same number of Hanoverians were at once to occupy Holstein, while a first reserve of 5000 Austrians and as many Prussians was to be stationed on the frontier, with a further force of 20,000 Austrians and 31,000 Prussians, to be held in readiness for the event of armed resistance. The execution, which did not at present necessarily mean war, was placed under the command of the Saxon General von Hake.

The two German Great Powers having thus decided on their course, it remained to be seen what would be that of the other Great Powers. The relations between France and Great Britain were not at this time favourable to effective joint action. In common with the Austrian

Government, the British had, in the previous summer, declined the propositions of France which tended to a war with Russia for the deliverance of Poland[1]; and, after hereupon the French Emperor had taken refuge in the proposal for a European Congress, Lord Russell had, on November 25th, taken the mortifying step of declining—or virtually declining participation in it[2], with the result that the Austrian Government had followed the same course.

When, about this time, the Augustenburg claimant appealed to Napoleon III for his countenance, the Emperor vouchsafed a vague but not unsympathetic reply; and, in order to show his annoyance at the British reception of his Congress proposal, suggested a Ministerial Conference between the chief continental Powers. The Prussian Government, again, declared its willingness to participate, though blandly pointing out that it would be difficult to induce other Powers to deal with any questions but the Danish, or to treat this without bringing in the British Government. Russia, too, being evidently disposed to exert pressure upon Denmark to accept the German view of the compact of 1852, the Danish Government thought it expedient to withdraw the March patent—a concession of little meaning so long as the November Constitution remained valid (December 4th). Lord Russell now made yet another attempt at mediation, sending Lord Wodehouse to Copenhagen, but on a useless errand. Pressure being put on the Danish Prime-minister Hall to bring about the revocation of the constitution, he resigned, and the King tried to form a Ministry of moderate men; but the Eider-Danes were too strong for him; and Bishop D. G. Monrad, formerly Minister of Public Worship, who took Hall's place, was resolute against revocation. Denmark had made up her mind for war, trusting to British support, of which, in the event of the invasion of

[1] S. Walpole, p. 383. [2] *Ib.* p. 395.

Schleswig, Palmerston had 'unofficially' assured Wodehouse[1].

In Germany, meanwhile, a storm of indignation had been called forth by the resolution of the Diet of December 7th, decreeing execution against King Christian as Duke of Holstein. The *Nationalverein* and the *Reformverein*, the adherents of the principle of Prussian hegemony and the *Grossdeutschen*, united in a meeting of nearly five hundred members of German *Landtage* at Frankfort (December 21st) to elect a Committee of thirty-six, which was henceforth to assume the guidance of the Schleswig-Holstein movement and, in a word, to take it out of the hands of the Great Powers and of the mistrusted Bismarck in particular[2]. Several of the lesser Governments fell in once more with the popular current. The Baden Ministry obtained from its Chambers a substantial mobilisation grant; and the Duke of Coburg, always glad to be a step in advance, allowed the levy of soldiers within his duchy for the Duke of Augustenburg. King Maximilian of Bavaria was urged, only half against his will, to place himself at the head of the movement and thus once more realise the old and irrepressible *Trias* programme. On December 18th, the Second Chamber at Berlin, after a haughty speech from Bismarck[3], passed an address imploring the King to withdraw from the Treaty of 1852 and to recognise Augustenburg as Duke of Schleswig-Holstein. It was answered with grave determination in a royal message signed by the whole Ministry.

The time for debate was past.

[1] See his letter *ap.* Walpole, vol. II, p. 401.

[2] Cf. Oncken, *Rudolf von Bennigsen*, vol. I, p. 626.

[3] This was the occasion on which he said that to him Virchow's and his friends' opinion on a grave diplomatic question was worth as much as his own opinion on an important anatomical problem would be to Virchow.

On December 12th, the customary seven days' notice had been served, by the four German Governments charged with the execution in Holstein, on the Danish Government to withdraw its troops; two Civil Commissioners having been appointed for the administration of the duchy, the Saxon and Hanoverian troops had crossed the frontier; and, by January 8th, the whole duchy was occupied by them[1]. As the troops marched on, the population acclaimed Duke Frederick VIII of Schleswig-Holstein, and (notwithstanding prohibitions from the Commissioners) expelled obnoxious officials and clergy, and placed trusty adherents of Duke Frederick in their places. The Duke himself established his small court and Ministry at Kiel; and it is not wonderful that neither in England nor elsewhere did the 'execution' seem to differ from an occupation.

The question now was as to the further step of occupying Schleswig, where there could be no question of an occupation. On December 19th Rechberg had proposed to Bismarck, unless Lord Wodehouse could obtain a suspension of the new Danish constitution by January 1st, 1864, a joint occupation of Schleswig, which would anticipate any intervention in that duchy by Augustenburg and his supporters, together with the acceptance of a London Conference on the whole question. Bismarck, in a memorandum to the King, urged the same line of action still more clearly. The two Powers, with or without the assent of the Confederation, should on January 1st issue an *ultimatum*, threatening Denmark, if the constitution were still unrevoked, with the occupation of Schleswig by way of a pledge for the fulfilment of the obligations of 1852.

The prospects of a motion embodying this policy being carried at the Diet were far from favourable. Bavaria, on December 23rd, proposed a speedy settlement of the succession question, and Hesse-Darmstadt a Federal

[1] F. W. Jähns, *Feldmarschall Moltke* (1894), vol. II, p. 341.

occupation of Schleswig for the protection of all rights; while a British note insisting on a Conference between the signatory Powers of the Treaty of 1852 was received at Frankfort with angry derision. On December 31st, the two Great Powers having moved at the Diet that the Duke of Augustenburg should be called upon to quit Holstein, the resolution was rejected by nine to seven votes. None of the lesser states adhered to the Great Powers except the Mecklenburgs and Hesse-Cassel, and even these without fervour. The assembly was under the sway of von der Pfordten, who held that neither was the Confederation bound by the London Protocol—which, it will be remembered, it had not signed—nor was the settlement then attempted now any longer possible. About the same time, the Berlin Chamber—for the continuous concurrence of the Prussian parliamentary quarrel with the Schleswig-Holstein trouble should at no point be overlooked—refused to accede to a mobilisation loan (of 12 million dollars) unless the Government would recognise Duke Frederick.

On January 5th, 1864, Bismarck took the decisive step of asking Austria to agree to the policy of presenting Denmark with an *ultimatum*, limited to 48 hours; should she refuse to withdraw the constitution within that time, Schleswig was to be occupied by the two Powers without further delay. The Conference was to be accepted only if preceded by the revocation of the constitution, or accompanied by the continued occupation of Schleswig. After much consideration a punctation to this effect was drawn up between the two Powers, according to which they reserved to themselves the right, after the outbreak of hostilities, of coming to an agreement as to the future of the duchies other than the stipulations of 1851–2, adding that in no case would either of them, except in pursuance of a mutual understanding, renounce the principle of the preservation of the Danish monarchy as at present existing,

or the obligation of recognising the succession of King Christian IX in all its sections. On January 14th, the day on which the Diet met to vote on the Hesse-Darmstadt motion, the Austrian and Prussian envoys proposed, in lieu of the occupation of Schleswig in the name of Duke Frederick, its occupation as a pledge for the fulfilment of Denmark's obligations; and, when this motion was rejected by a vote of 11 to 5, they announced their intention to take the process into their own hands. Indignant protests were raised by the Bavarian and Saxon Governments, and loudly echoed by the populations of the south-west; at Munich a popular meeting called upon King Maximilian to throw his sword into the scale. On the other hand, Austria and Prussia now (January 16th) concluded their convention, as finally drafted by Bismarck[1], and, on the same day, sent a telegram to Copenhagen demanding the revocation of the constitution within 48 hours. Monrad now asked for a delay, but was informed that he was too late; whereupon he rejected the demand (January 18th). Inasmuch as the Danes declined to evacuate Schleswig without resistance (as they had evacuated Holstein), this refusal meant war. The Austrian and Prussian troops were in readiness at their bases in Hamburg and Lübeck; some difficulty raised by Hanover against a Prussian march-through was peremptorily overcome; on January 20th, Field-marshal von Wrangel assumed the supreme command over the forces of the allies; and on the following day they entered Holstein and began their march towards the Eider.

Inasmuch as the Saxon and Hanoverian Governments could not bring themselves to place their troops under Wrangel's command, they were reduced to the uncomfortable position of lookers-on. Among the Great Powers who were not directly concerned in the conflict, Great Britain

[1] This was the secret compact published by Bismarck, *more suo*, in the *Staatsanzeiger* in June 1866, on the eve of the war with Austria.

found herself isolated, Russia remained motionless, and the French Emperor neither now nor later responded to Lord Russell's enquiries whether he would support Great Britain in upholding the integrity of the Danish monarchy and the succession of Christian IX. The British Foreign Secretary's eager efforts with the Great German Powers and with the Danish Government were equally unsuccessful; his renewed proposals (January 20th) for a conference and truce were accepted by Austria and Prussia only on condition that Schleswig (including Alsen and Düppel) should be placed in their hands as a security; and his final proposal to them to substitute for this material pledge a protocol signed by all the Powers who had been parties to that of 1852, and promising, on the part of Denmark, the exclusion of Schleswig from the new constitution, was at once refused. 'We have not abandoned the engagements of 1851–2, though Austria and Prussia may do so,' Lord Russell wrote so late as February 24th. But he and Lord Palmerston had reckoned without their cabinet; and the war began as it ended, without British interference by anything beyond words. Bismarck, as he wrote on January 31st, agreed that a definitive settlement was impossible without the cooperation of the Powers who had signed the Treaty of 1852; but he knew that the outbreak of war had left the two German Powers with their hands free. Early on February 1st the first Austrians, and immediately afterwards the first Prussians, entered the duchy of Schleswig[1].

The campaign which now began illustrates the chief difficulty that besets the conduct of a war—how to obtain and preserve harmony between the statesman and the strategist; a difficulty to which in the case of allies is

[1] *Der Deutsch-Dänische Krieg*, 1864. Hrgbn. vom Grossen Generalstabe (Berlin, 1866–7), vol. I, pp. 128 and 123.

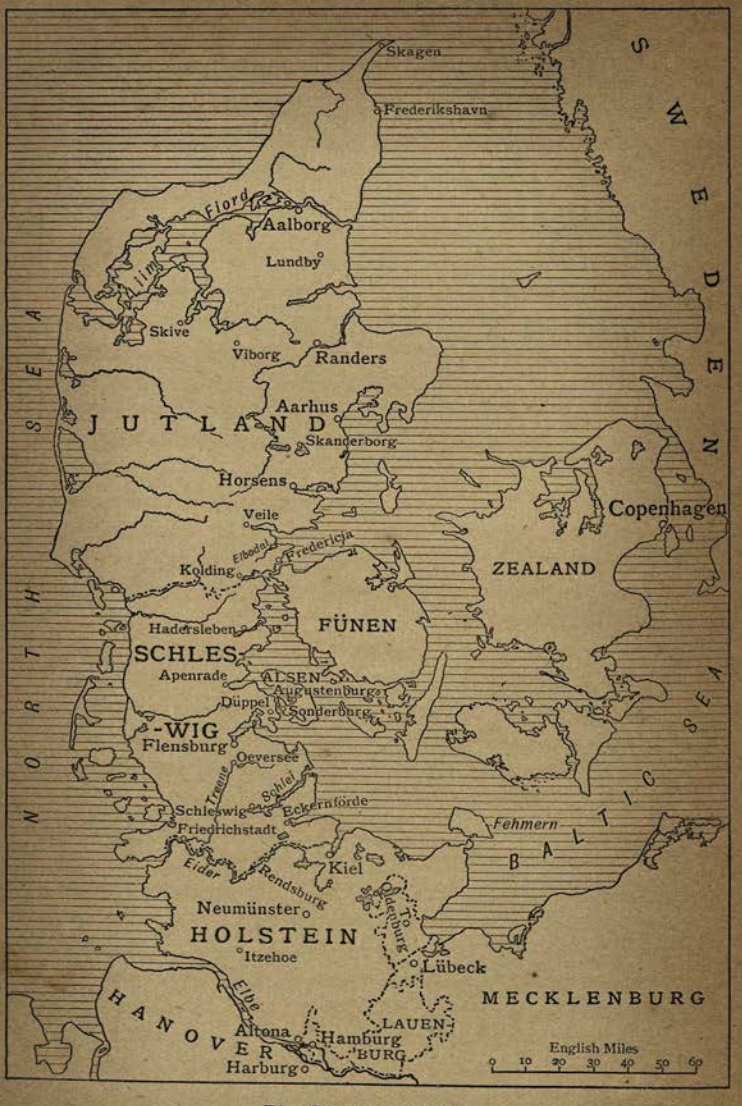
added the necessity for agreement between their Governments, in the absence of which the strategist is paralysed. It has been seen how, from the time of his regency onwards, King William had devoted himself to the task of strengthening his army, in order that Prussia might not again suffer humiliation such as had befallen her at Olmütz. His first step—the appointment, in October 1857, of General von Moltke to succeed General von Reyher as Chief of the General Staff—was a happy inspiration. The reorganisation of the army, by which its striking-power was doubled, and which had been carried out through the instrumentality of Roon as Minister of War, had been completed by the beginning of 1861, when the Regent became King; and the appointment of Bismarck as Minister-president was made with a view to securing a Minister who would guard the new army against parliamentary attacks and carry on the government even when the rejection of budgets rendered the requisite expenditure unconstitutional. As a matter of fact, it placed at the head of the King's Government a statesman who had set before himself a great aim, the establishment of Prussia as the ruling power in Germany.

Bismarck's first opportunity presented itself in the crisis that had arisen from the new political development in the Danish monarchy. The military possibilities of the situation he was able to discuss with his intimate friend Roon, who was possessed of the judgment expressed on this subject by Moltke, the Chief of the General Staff (at this time a subordinate of the Minister of War). In Moltke Prussia possessed the strategist whom she required, though in 1864 his powers were not fully appreciated and the King was influenced by other advisers.

Freiherr Helmuth von Moltke was a student rather than a man at arms. Born in Mecklenburg in 1800, he was by turns a schoolboy in Holstein, a cadet at Copenhagen, a page at the Danish Court and a lieutenant in the Danish

army. At 22, he resigned his Danish commission to enter the Prussian service, which as a German he preferred. Then, he devoted the hours he could spare from his military duties and from the claims of court and society to his favourite studies of history and geography. While a Prussian lieutenant, he translated the whole (or nearly the whole) of Gibbon into German.

As a captain, he set out to see the Mediterranean world; but his plan was changed at Constantinople by an invitation to take service under the Sultan. As a Turkish officer he surveyed and mapped Constantinople, the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles, as well as large regions of Roumelia and Armenia. He trained an army and was the adviser of its commander; but his bold plan of campaign was beyond the intelligence of his Pasha; and, when he could not avert defeat, he fought until the army had dispersed; whereupon he made his way back to report to the Sultan, who by this time was dead. In 1839, he was at home again. His early writings on Turkey are masterpieces of description and of military criticism. For many years he was employed as a staff-officer at Coblenz, Magdeburg and Berlin. In 1845–6, he resided at Rome as adjutant to Prince Henry of Prussia and occupied his spare time with making an admirable map of Rome and its neighbourhood. In 1855, he was appointed adjutant to Prince Frederick William, afterwards Crown-prince, and in that capacity frequently visited the British, French and Russian Courts. He was happily married and found his chief delight at home, his favourite recreation being music. He looked on the world with the eye of a statesman, and nothing was further from him than the pedantry of soldiering. The extreme poverty of his early years and the hardships and trials of his life in Turkey had given his will the temper of steel; his quick decision and firm resolve never degenerated into misplaced stubbornness. With the imperturbable courtesy



The Theatre of War

and serenity of an oriental he combined the tranquil humour of a mind in perfect equipoise[1].

In December 1862, Moltke (who spoke Danish like a Dane and was familiar with both the country and its people) had, in reply to an enquiry from Roon, set forth in writing the conclusions reached by him on the subject of a new war against Denmark. In 1850, he had been thought of as a possible commander for the Schleswig-Holstein army, and, earlier in 1862, he had, by way of a preparatory study, written the history of the Danish campaign of 1848. The conclusions which he now confidentially laid before Roon were drawn, in part, from geographical conditions. The continental territory of the Danish monarchy consisted of the Jutish peninsula, about 300 miles long from the Elbe to its northernmost point Skagen (the Skaw), and from 30 to 90 miles wide. Its eastern fringe along the Baltic is a land of hills from 150 to 400 feet high, indented by deep inlets of the sea, and separated only by narrow channels from the islands of Fehmern, Alsen and Fünen. The rest of the country is a belt of land so flat on the western side, where it borders the North Sea, that it has to be protected by dykes from the sea, which, in the southern half of the peninsula, composed of Schleswig and Holstein, forms a long lagoon interspersed with islands. The low and marshy western coastland is unsuited for the movements of troops, while the fiords of the east coast confine through-communication to the inland edge of the hill country and to the sandy plains between the hills and the marshland.

Moltke thought that the difficulty in a war with Denmark lay in delivering a decisive blow which would induce the Danes to give up their resistance. As he

[1] See Spenser Wilkinson, *The Early Life of Moltke*. (Lecture delivered before the University of Oxford, 1913.)

afterwards[1] phrased it, the crux lay, not in *carrying* on the war with so much larger a force, but in *ending* it. In presence of the greatly superior Danish fleet it was not practicable to land a Prussian army in the island of Zealand, so as to dictate peace at Copenhagen. The first object must be to annihilate the Danish army, which would be possible if that army should attempt to hold the position of the Dannevirke, a line of forts erected south of the town of Schleswig, between the fiord of the Schlei and the inundations of the river Treene. Within a month from the first order, the Danes might have 25,000 infantry holding the central part of this position. The best course for Prussia would be to take the field with 60,000 men including 50,000 infantry, of whom half would approach the Dannevirke, while the rest, in two bodies, would try to turn it by crossing the Schlei and the Treene. The Danes would perhaps not wait till they were turned, but would retreat, through Flensburg, to their fortified position of Düppel, which covered the crossing to and from the island of Alsen. If the Danish army should thus evade the blow, the only course open to Prussia would be the occupation of all Jutland for the purpose of exacting contributions from its people. This occupation, if prolonged, might induce the Danish Government to accept Prussia's terms. It would be easily accomplished, provided that the Prussians left behind forces sufficient to screen their advance against attack from Düppel, the bridgehead of Alsen, and from the fortress of Fredericia, the bridgehead of Fünen. In any case, Prussia must achieve quickly whatever she might undertake, so as to meet with a *fait accompli* any wish on the part of the Great Powers to interfere. For that purpose, she must place in the field an army double the strength of

[1] *Kurze Übersicht des Feldzuges* 1864 *gegen Dänemark* in Moltke's *Kriegsgeschichtliche Arbeiten* (*Militärische Werke*, III), part II (1899), p. 70.

the whole Danish army, and must be ready at any moment to call out her whole army to resist French or other intervention.

The Danish army was based upon universal service from the age of 21 to 45, one year and one-third being spent with the colours, six years and two-thirds in the reserve and six years in a second reserve, after which, at 35, the men passed into a further or final reserve. The normal peace strength of the army was 7500 men. For the war against Austria and Prussia the first and second reserves were called out, in order to bring the army up to a strength of 60,000 (the strength actually reached was 54,000); so that there were called out seven reservists for each man who would have been with the colours in time of peace. A battalion was thus increased from 224 to 1550 rank and file, and required a large number of additional officers and non-commissioned officers, who were necessarily imperfectly trained, if indeed they had any previous training at all. Troops so constituted cannot possess the cohesion of troops with stronger *cadres* and fewer reservists. The artillery, which was in process of rearmament with rifled guns, in peace had only two guns horsed in each battery, so that in this arm too the mobilised units resembled improvised troops rather than regulars. One-third of the troops were in peace recruited in Schleswig-Holstein; and, since these could not be employed against a German invasion, such of them as were retained in the service were quartered in Zealand.

At the end of January, the expanded Danish field-army consisted of three infantry divisions of three brigades each, an infantry reserve of two brigades, a cavalry division of two brigades and an artillery reserve of 48 guns. After the withdrawal from Holstein, these forces were posted, as Moltke had anticipated, on the line, about 45 miles long, from Friedrichstadt on the Treene to Kappeln on the

Schlei. The first division guarded the Schlei along its northern bank and the bridgehead at Missunde. The second division held the right wing from Friedrichstadt to Hollingstedt, which was covered by the inundation of the Treene, with one brigade, while its other two brigades and the third division were posted in the central position known as the Dannevirke, between the Treene and Schleswig. This part of the front was protected by thirty-three forts, of which the parapets were as high as 27 feet and the ditches 15 feet deep. The reserve brigade was posted at Schleswig, and each division had outposts about half a march to its front.

The allied army assembled in January in Holstein under the command of Field-marshal von Wrangel was composed at this time of the Ist corps (Prussian), 25,000 men and 96 guns, under Prince Frederick Charles, the IInd corps (Austrian), 20,000 men and 148 guns, under Field-marshal-lieutenant von Gablenz; the IIIrd corps (Prussian), 10,000 men and 14 guns, of the new regiments of the Guard. This force of 55,000 men and 258 guns was afterwards reinforced by the 9th, 10th and 21st Prussian brigades, making a further 15,000 men, as well as by numerous siege and field guns. Moltke had written out a project for the capture of the Danish army in the Dannevirke position, laying stress on turning the left wing by crossing the Schlei at Missunde or further east, without scaring the Danes from the position before the completion of the turning movement. This project was communicated to Wrangel as a suggestion, but not as a binding order.

On February 1st, Wrangel crossed the Eider canal at various points between Kiel and Rendsburg, the Ist (Prussian) corps on the right, the IInd (Austrian) on the left, and advanced six or seven miles into Schleswig, the Danish outposts falling back before the invaders. On the

2nd, Prince Frederick Charles, with the Ist corps, pushed on through Eckernförde and Kochendorf to Missunde, where he attacked the forts on the southern bank, employing for the purpose 8000 infantry and 78 guns. The action lasted about six hours, costing the Prussians 193 casualties, and, in the evening, Prince Frederick Charles reported that he could not hope to drive the Danes out of their forts. Wrangel kept him halting in front of Missunde for the next three days. On the 3rd, the IInd (Austrian) corps moved towards the Dannevirke, while the IIIrd (Prussian), which had been brought on the 1st by railway from Altona, came up from Rendsburg on the left of the Austrian and marched side by side with it. The Austrian advance-guard vigorously attacked a Danish post at Oberselk and drove it from the Königsberg, while the advance-guard of the IIIrd corps drove a Danish party out of Jagel. The Danes were thus made aware that an attack on the centre of their position by 30,000 Austrians and Prussians was to be expected, while 25,000 Prussians were in the peninsula of Schwansen, ready to cross the Schlei. The 4th was spent by the allies in reconnaissance, and, on the 5th, Prince Frederick Charles was allowed by Wrangel to march his corps down the peninsula, so as to force a crossing on the 6th at Arnis, near the point where the Schlei opens into the Baltic. Wrangel's project was to begin his assault on the forts between Schleswig and the Treene in the afternoon of the 6th, when it was expected that the Ist corps, after crossing the Schlei at Arnis, would have marched to Missunde. But, on the morning of the 6th, the Danish troops were nowhere to be seen. They had retreated in the night from the 5th to the 6th by order of their capable commander-in-chief General de Meza, who saw that, if he were to await an assault or a turning movement, the existence of his army would be endangered. Prince Frederick Charles threw his bridge over the Schlei without opposition and marched

halfway to Flensburg without meeting an enemy. Field-marshal von Gablenz pushed on through Schleswig and came up at Oeversee with the Danish rearguard, which he attacked and drove back, but could not pursue. The start they had gained during the night and the resistance of the rearguard at Oeversee enabled the first three Danish divisions to reach Düppel on the evening of February 7th, when the 4th (cavalry) division under General Hegermann-Lindencrone, which retreated northwards towards Jutland, reached Apenrade. The allied forces, after reaching Flensburg, divided, so as to follow the divided enemy. The Ist (Prussian) corps moved towards Düppel, where its advance parties touched the Danish outposts on the 9th. The IIIrd (Prussian) corps marched northwards towards Hadersleben, while the IInd (Austrian), halting at Flensburg, formed a reserve for either Prussian corps.

Even at this early stage of the war, the course of events had not failed to reveal the consequences of the opposition between the policy pursued by Bismarck and for the present supported by Austria, and the wishes of the lesser German Governments, which coincided with those of the nation at large. It was part of Bismarck's design to estrange Austria from the secondary and lesser states by obliging her to follow a policy opposed to theirs (and much disliked even in Austria itself), because she could not place herself at their head in pressing the Augustenburg solution of the Schleswig-Holstein problem, so long as she sought to maintain the understanding with Prussia expressed in the treaty between them of January 16th.

When, in November 1863, the Hanoverian Government had agreed to send a brigade to take part, with the Saxon brigade, in the Federal execution in Holstein, orders had been issued to the Hanoverian troops not to cross the Elbe unless and until the Austrian and Prussian brigades were assembled north of that river. Again, in January 1864, when the

Prussian Government requested the Hanoverian to authorise the transport by rail of the 13th division across Hanoverian territory from Minden to Harburg, the reply was delayed. This caused uneasiness at Berlin, and the King consulted Moltke as to what should be done in case Hanover should refuse its permission. Moltke replied that, in this event, the 13th division must take possession of Hanover, and be reinforced by a division of the Guards: any resistance could be crushed in a few days without substantially delaying the invasion of Schleswig[1]. At the same time, Wrangel, in taking command of the Austrian and Prussian reserve brigades in Holstein, invited the Federal commander, General von Hake, to put himself and the Saxon and Hanoverian brigades under his command. This Hake declined; but he agreed to withdraw his two brigades from eastern Holstein to the road Altona-Itzehoe-Rendsburg and so leave the eastern region free for the Austro-Prussian advance. Wrangel then asked for more Prussian troops, in order to be able, if need were, to deal with the troops of the Confederation. He was promised the twelve new battalions of the Guard, 10,000 men, which were accordingly sent to Hamburg, to form the IIIrd (Prussian) corps, immediately after the Austrian army corps. On February 10th, Wrangel required Hake to admit Prussian garrisons into the towns of Kiel, Rendsburg, Neumünster and Altona; and, on the 12th and the following days, Prussian troops occupied these places. The Federal commander had refused to agree to this operation without orders; but the Prussians carried it out, fortunately not coming to a collision with the Federal garrisons. Saxony then proposed at the Diet that a protest should be made, the withdrawal of the Prussian garrisons demanded, and the Saxons and Hanoverians strengthened by other Confederate troops. Prussia replied by putting the VIth army corps

[1] Moltke, *Militärische Korrespondenz, Krieg 1864* (1892), p. 77.

(Silesian) on a war footing, by sending General von Manteuffel to give explanations at Dresden and Hanover[1], and by moving at the Diet that Hake's troops should be put under Wrangel's command. This proposal was rejected on March 3rd, and Prussia mobilised a further brigade (the 9th).

Meanwhile, the Bavarian Government, which, with those of the other states in agreement with it, had held another conference at Würzburg on February 18th, had on the 25th, at Frankfort, failed to carry a vote declaring the London Treaty of 1852 invalid, but had succeeded in passing a motion declaring that the question of the succession in the duchies called for immediate decision. An attempt to strengthen the Federal forces in Holstein by the dispatch of Bavarian and Württemberg troops came to nothing; and the whole endeavour of Bavaria to secure the leadership of the policy of the secondary states and oppose it successfully to that of the two Great Powers—after being supported by Saxony with reservations imposed by the loyalty of King John—broke down with the rather sudden death (March 10th) of King Maximilian II, to whom Archduke Albrecht had only recently been sent by the Austrian Emperor. On March 12th von der Pfordten obtained a small majority at the Diet in favour of the recognition of Duke Frederick of Schleswig-Holstein; but no further step was taken at present.

The death of King Maximilian II was a loss to the Würzburg associates; he had overtaxed his strength in the effort to which he had succumbed. The King had combined with Liberal and anti-clerical political tendencies the wish to realise the idea of the *Trias* by assuming the leadership

[1] Sybel thinks Ranke's hand recognisable in the *pro memoriâ* which Manteuffel took with him to Dresden, and which demonstrated the future awaiting the secondary states, if they persisted in opposing Austria and Prussia.

of the lesser states. He was a true friend of scientific research, more especially in the field of history, and sought to make Munich a centre of German academical, as his father had made it a chosen home of German artistic, life. Summoned by him to his capital, a band of scholars from northern Germany, in the words of his intimate Döllinger, founded a school of learning which the home growth of the next generation was to supplement and sustain. This was his truest service to German unity. His son and successor King Lewis II had, at the outset, to leave the conduct of affairs entirely to his Ministers, and was then hampered by peculiar difficulties.

The retreat of the Danish army and the sacrifice of the Dannevirke gave rise, in the first instance, to an outburst of wrath at Copenhagen and to a manifestation of regret in the capitals of the Powers friendly to Denmark. While the Emperor Napoleon III sent congratulations of a not wholly unmixed kind, Palmerston turned savagely upon Bernstorff; but, though the press was virtually unanimous in its outcry, no responsible politician in either party showed a disposition to plunge Great Britain into the war. Gortchakoff, though he continued to preach the maintenance of the London Protocol, plainly intimated that Russia would never take up arms against Prussia. Even in Sweden, popular and parliamentary feeling was still for neutrality, though Manderström deferred to the royal wish so far as to declare that, if France and Great Britain would furnish aid to Denmark, Swedish troops would not be wanting. In Copenhagen itself, the retreat of the Danish army startled the party in power and the general public, who had regarded the position of the Dannevirke as an impregnable bulwark. General de Meza was recalled to Copenhagen, subjected to an enquiry as to his retreat, and disgraced; and the command of the army was given to General J. D. Gerlach. But de Meza was undoubtedly right in his withdrawal from the

Dannevirke—a movement which, for the time, baffled the allies, as it took away their hope of ending the war by a decisive blow at the outset. In Berlin there was a wish that the position of Düppel should be attacked; but the Prussian strategists knew this to be impracticable without the siege-train, for which Moltke had asked, but which Roon had not provided, and thought that the right course was to invade Jutland, leaving the Ist corps to observe Düppel.

Accordingly on February 10th, Wrangel issued orders for the advance northwards of the IInd and IIIrd corps, while the Ist was to continue its operations against Düppel. The IIIrd corps moved towards the frontier of Jutland, followed by the IInd. But, on the 15th, Karolyi expressed to Bismarck the hope that there would be no invasion of Jutland without a previous agreement between the two Powers; the Emperor of Austria had already written an autograph letter to King William in this sense. On the same evening, Roon telegraphed to Wrangel the King's command that the frontier of Jutland should not be crossed until further orders. This was received next morning by Wrangel, who gave no hint to his subordinates of the prohibition he had received. On the 18th, the Prussian advance-guard, approaching Kolding in Jutland, found the Danes retiring and pushed on after them through the town, which they occupied before receiving a belated order from Wrangel not to cross the frontier. Next day, the Crown-prince, who was present at headquarters, insisted that there should be no going back. This disregard of an ally and of the orders of the Government is justified by the Prussian official historian on the ground of military necessity, for which he accounts by the impossibility, at the time, of storming Düppel or taking Alsen. Manteuffel was sent to Vienna with a letter from the King to the Emperor, explaining that the occupation of Jutland was necessary as a reprisal for the seizure of German ships

by the Danes, which was likely to be followed by a blockade. The Confederate states must be taught, once for all, that, if they desired to subordinate the European policy of Austria and Prussia to their wishes, the days of the Confederation were at an end. Some little time passed before Francis Joseph's hesitation, his unwillingness to offend the neutral Powers and his distrust of France, in particular, gave way; but, on March 1st, Manteuffel and Rechberg arrived at the understanding desired by Prussia.

Meanwhile, the Austrian opposition to the invasion of Jutland made the authorities at Berlin anxious for some feat of arms to be achieved by the new Prussian army, the more so as the popular mind attributed the retreat from the Dannevirke to the prowess of the Austrian corps, which had fought well at Oeversee. An attack on the position of Düppel was therefore urged. But that position was not to be taken by assault. It consisted of ten strong forts on a commanding site, stretching from the Alsen sound on a line about two miles long to the bay called the Wenningbund and covering two bridges over the sound to the island of Alsen. Until a sufficient number of heavy guns could be brought up, little more was possible than to push back the Danish and to advance the Prussian outposts. On February 18th, Prince Frederick Charles seized the peninsula of Broacker to the south of the Wenningbund and prepared to mount guns at Gammelmark, whence the southern forts of Düppel could be enfiladed. The earliest guns were not in position until March 15th, when the southern forts were first bombarded, as well as the town of Sonderburg, which received no notice of the bombardment, so that the non-combatant inhabitants suffered much hardship.

The Austro-Prussian agreement, signed at Berlin on March 6th, defined the purpose of the allies, in the first instance, as the capture of the Danish positions at Düppel and on the island of Alsen; and it was settled that Wrangel

might advance so far into Jutland as he should think necessary for guarding against Danish enterprises based upon Fredericia. The two Powers were willing to accept an armistice and a Conference on the basis either of the reciprocal evacuation of Alsen and of Jutland or of the *uti possidetis* (provided the Danes would stop their blockade of the German seaports and return the captured merchant-ships). In accordance with their treaty of January 16th—or, more correctly, in development of it—they regarded the agreements of 1851–2 as having lost their binding character through the state of war with Denmark, and intended to propose jointly to the Conference a new settlement of the position of the duchies in the Danish monarchy.

Wrangel was at once informed that he was now at liberty to enter Jutland. He had under his command, at Kolding and in northern Schleswig, the IIIrd (Prussian) and IInd (Austrian) corps. The wish was expressed by the King[1] that the Prussian Guards (the IIIrd corps) might have an opportunity of showing their mettle; and it was accordingly arranged that, while the Austrians should invade Jutland, the Prussian corps should attack Fredericia. Both corps set out from Kolding on March 8th, the IIIrd crossing the Elbodal in the direction of Fredericia, the IInd taking the road towards Veile, where General Hegermann with 5000 men was holding the heights north of the town. His left rested on the fiord, and his right could be turned only by a long march. The Austrian brigade sent to turn the Danish left was delayed in the crossing of a swollen river, and the attack of the Austrian main body on the strong Danish centre was resisted until dark, when the Danes withdrew in good order. The Austrians were so exhausted as to be unable to pursue until next day; by which time General Hegermann's force had disappeared into the wide expanse of Jutland. Gablenz, after a few

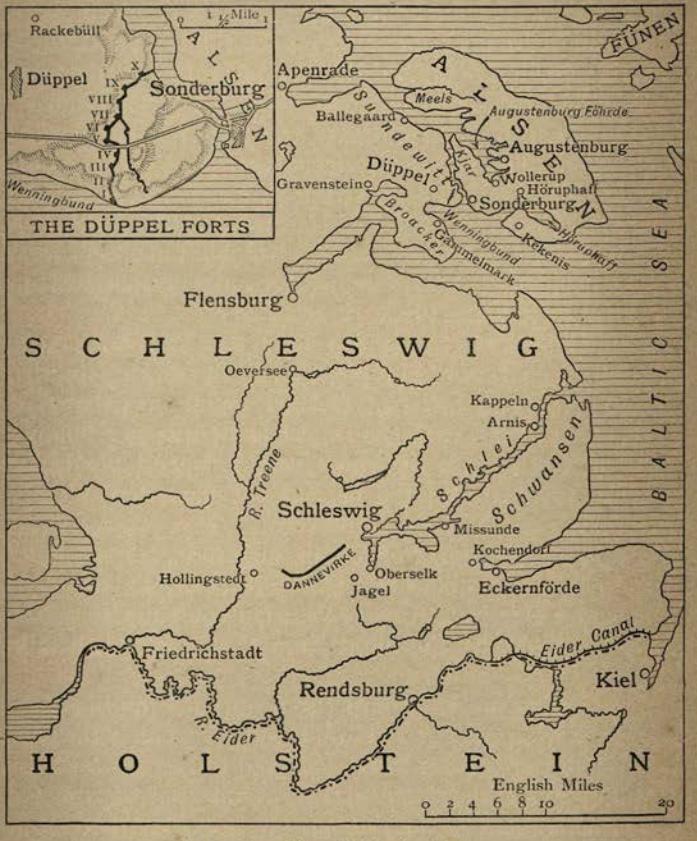
[1] Moltke, *op. cit.*, p. 100.

days' advance of part of his force, which failed to discover the Danish troops, collected his corps at Veile and Horsens, in order to be at hand to support the attack on Fredericia. This was delivered on March 19th by the IIIrd corps on the left and half the IInd corps on the right. The Danish outposts were driven in, and the German outposts advanced towards the fortress, to cover the building of batteries during the night. On the 20th and 21st, the place was bombarded by 42 guns. The result convinced the allied commanders that, for an effective bombardment, siege-guns would be required. Thereupon, the Prussian troops were withdrawn to Düppel (March 25th) and the Austrians left in observation of Fredericia, where they remained, covered against Jutland by a brigade at Veile, till April 20th.

Meanwhile, it was thought in Berlin that Prussian honour required the capture of Düppel, though the strategists with the army were convinced by Colonel von Blumenthal that the best way to deal with the Danish army was by a landing on Alsen, the success of which would depend partly on surprise and partly on the erection of shore batteries to keep away any Danish men-of-war. The project, first mooted in the first week of March, may have seemed more likely to be practicable after the capture of the island of Fehmern on March 15th by a Prussian company that had rowed across during the night from the mainland, a mile away.

The landing on Alsen and the operations for the siege of Düppel were prepared simultaneously. The attack on the forts at Düppel was to be delivered to the south of the Flensburg-Sonderburg road and to be directed against the six southern forts. The Danish advance posts had been pushed back and a reconnaissance made in a sharp engagement at Rackebüll-Düppel on March 17th; but a second engagement at Düppel on March 28th did not bring the Prussians to the ground on which they meant to open the

first parallel. A parallel was however opened, on ground not so far advanced, in the night of March 30th–31st, and



Dannevirke, Düppel, Alsen

siege artillery continued to be sent on from Prussia. Meantime boats and pontoons were collected for crossing over

to Alsen. The plan was to launch the boats and pontoons at Ballegaard and to row across the Augustenburg Föhrde, a mile wide, to the peninsula of Meels. It was calculated that 1500 men could be landed in each voyage, and that the landings could follow one another at intervals of an hour and a half.

April 3rd was fixed for the enterprise. All was ready on the previous evening; but, during the night, a storm arose and produced a high sea, in which no boat could be launched. This was fatal to the project, which depended upon surprise; and, since it was thought impossible to maintain secrecy as to preparations of which the inhabitants were aware, the enterprise was for the time abandoned.

By April 10th, siege-guns had arrived. That night the second parallel was opened and the guns mounted. On the 12th, 28 batteries opened a fire which proved overwhelming. Many Danish guns were dismounted, the parapets of the forts were badly damaged and the ramps rendered useless, so that the Danes could not bring fresh guns into position. General von Gerlach brought back from Fredericia a brigade which had been sent there at the time of the first advance of the allies towards Jutland, so that he had, in Alsen and at Düppel, seven brigades. But four of them had to be quartered in Alsen, too far away to be brought up in time to resist a sudden attack. In the night of April 13th–14th, the Prussians pushed forward and established their third parallel at a distance of less than 400 yards from the forts.

General von Gerlach considered that the position of Düppel had become untenable and proposed its evacuation to his Government. But the Danish Ministry was hoping great things from the Conference in London, of which the opening had been originally fixed for April 20th, though it did not actually meet till April 25th, and believed that it would be an advantage, when the Conference assembled, to be able to point to a successful resistance at Düppel. General

von Gerlach was therefore, on April 14th, ordered to hold the position to the last. He replied that it would be better to leave in it a small force which could be withdrawn in case of serious attack, after which he could still defend the line of the Alsen sound. But to this suggestion he received no reply. On April 18th, the Prussians delivered their long-prepared assault, in which the Ist corps was supported by the Guards, brought back from Jutland, and by the 10th brigade. During the night, some 8000 men, formed into six storming-columns, were moved into the front trenches, with a reserve of two brigades ready in the rear, while a brigade at Rackebüll was in waiting to attack the works on the Danish right, with the IIIrd corps not far behind it, and another brigade was kept, at the north end of the sound, ready to make a feint of crossing, or even to attempt an actual crossing.

The Danes had hardly more than 2000 men in and near the six forts selected for attack. At 4 a.m., the Prussians opened fire from 102 guns, to which their adversaries could make little reply. At 10, the bombardment ceased, and the storming-columns rushed across the short space that separated them from the forts. The Danes hardly had time to man their parapets before the enemy was upon them; and in ten minutes all the six forts had been taken. The ever-increasing Prussian force pushed on and drove back the Danish supporting brigade, meeting it halfway between its camp and the captured forts and compelling it to fall back over the bridges across the sound, which were protected by a work. The northern forts, turned by the troops that had taken the southern, and also attacked in front by other troops, were no longer tenable and had to be evacuated. By one o'clock the whole of the Düppel position was in Prussian hands. There were some 1200 killed and wounded on each side; and the Danes lost also 3500 prisoners.

The storming of Düppel failed to produce the result at which the allies aimed—a change of attitude on the part of Denmark. The confidence of Government and people there was not yet broken. In the invitation to the Conference (which had not yet opened) there was no mention, in one way or another, of the Treaty of 1852; the Diet had agreed on instructions to its representative, judiciously formulated by Prussia in sufficiently general terms, and had chosen as their representative Beust, who was not, like von der Pfordten, bound to urge the immediate recognition of Augustenburg. In Germany, the military success, which meant the seizure of the whole of Schleswig, had not sufficed to put an end to the ardent conflict of opinion. The old distrust of the Bismarck Government survived in Russia, who, though she held back, stood in a very close relation to the Treaty of 1852; and Austria had not gone back from her recent pronouncement to the neutral Powers in favour of preserving the integrity of the Danish monarchy. In England, though the influence of the course of events, strengthened by what was known of the views of Queen Victoria and King Leopold, was gradually making itself felt, Palmerston and the bulk of the newspaper press continued to proclaim their hostility to the German designs. With France Great Britain was at this time in rather delicate relations[1]; and the Emperor was seeking to shape a policy of his own for use at the Conference.

Before the actual opening of the Conference, which had as a matter of course been delayed, though not through Beust's fault, by the formalities of and after his election, military operations had continued. The allies remained under the necessity of keeping in the Sundewitt a strong force to resist a possible Danish sortie from Alsen. Resort was also had to the course from the first recommended

[1] It was the time of the discovery of another Mazzinist plot and of the curtailed visit of Garibaldi to this country.

by Moltke—the occupation of Jutland. A Prussian division was formed for the purpose under Count Münster and advanced to Skive and Aalborg, while the Guard occupied Horsens, and, on April 29th, Aarhuus and Skanderborg.

On March 17th, the Prussian captain Jachmann, with two corvettes, a smaller steamer and a flotilla of gunboats, had ventured out from Swinemünde and engaged the Danish blockading squadron; but only the superior speed of his ships secured his retreat into harbour. On May 5th, too, the gallant Austrian captain Tegetthoff, with two Austrian frigates and a small Prussian flotilla, risked an encounter with a Danish squadron near Heligoland; but his flagship was badly damaged and his squadron was lucky in escaping to the neutral waters of that island[1].

The London Conference had opened on April 25th. The presiding plenipotentiary, Lord Russell, was in a very literal sense supported by Lord Clarendon, whose sentiments towards Prussia were an open secret. Of the other neutral Powers, Russia was represented by Baron Brunnow, whose discretion, though he had been one of the authors of the Treaty of 1852, was implicitly trusted by Gortchakoff, while Beust describes him as 'next to the Danes the most ardent champion of Denmark'; France, by Prince La Tour d'Auvergne, who showed a marked disposition not to incline too strongly to either side; and Sweden by Count Wachtmeister, whose instructions were simply to aid the Danish plenipotentiaries to the best of his power. These were the capable and moderate Minister G. J. Quaade, and two other Ministers of declared Eider-Danish views, Baron Torben Bille and A. F. Krieger. Prussia herself was represented by Bernstorff, and by H. L. von Balan, formerly Prussian envoy at Copenhagen, who found no strenuous cooperation either in the first Austrian plenipotentiary,

[1] This (undecided) action was announced in some English papers as a battle 'near Dunkelwerden.'

Apponyi, or in the second, Biegeleben, whose antipathy to Prussian policy has been already noticed. The cause of the duchies had an indefatigable supporter in Beust, who gallantly braved the unpopularity which he found attaching to it in England, both inside and outside the Conference, except in the highest quarter[1].

At the first meeting of the Conference the neutral Powers at once proposed the conclusion of an armistice; but, the belligerents differing as to the cessation of the Danish blockade, the question was adjourned. The appearance of an Austrian squadron off Deal, intended for the breaking of the blockade, caused much excitement in England, and Palmerston used some very strong language to Apponyi; but, though the Austrians stopped the progress of their ships, they all the more resolutely joined with the Prussians in insisting upon the cessation of the blockade as a condition of an armistice. Hereupon, at the second sitting of the Conference (May 4th), Russell moved accordingly; but at its third sitting (May 9th), Quaade surprised the Conference by rejecting even this proposal. Finally, the Prussian proposal of a month's armistice, with cessation of blockade, was accepted. The armistice was to begin on May 12th; and it was afterwards arranged that hostilities should not be resumed until June 25th.

The advance of the general political question which the Conference had been summoned to decide was, in the meantime, very slow. Before the opening of the Conference, an address calling upon it to uphold the historic freedom of Schleswig-Holstein and to come to no resolution concerning the future of the duchies without or against their will had been drawn up by the Committee of the Thirty-six[2], and covered with signatures from all parts of Germany.

[1] See his *Memoirs* (Engl. tr.), vol. I, chaps. XXIV and XXV.

[2] Cf. p. 145, *ante*.

About the same time, the *Reformverein*, the association of the *Grossdeutschen*, proclaimed its advocacy of the liberty of Schleswig-Holstein and the Augustenburg succession; and a meeting at Rendsburg of 40,000 men from the duchies declared their readiness to shed their life's blood in the same cause. Bismarck gave instructions that the agitation should be kept up all through Schleswig, whether or not it should write Augustenburg on its banners. His present purpose was to prepare the new settlement of the position of the duchies, to which in principle Austria had agreed on March 6th, and to begin by tearing up the Treaty of 1852. Accordingly, in the sitting of the Conference of May 12th, Bernstorff declared in the name of the German Powers that the Treaty of 1852 was extinct, and that they were ready to consider any new combination that would lead to an enduring peace. After discussion, the Conference agreed to receive the new German proposals at its next sitting. Thus a great step in advance—to which the adhesion of Austria had only with difficulty been obtained—had been taken. It may be doubted whether Bismarck would have ventured on the next, had he not been encouraged by the likelihood of British acquiescence to some extent, this again being partly due to the clear refusal, on May 14th, of the Emperor Napoleon to join in a demonstration against Germany proposed by Palmerston. Accordingly, at the sitting of May 17th, Bernstorff read a declaration by the German Powers, purporting that the only satisfactory guarantee of an enduring peace could be found in the complete political independence of the duchies united with each other by their common institutions.

The author of this declaration, but few besides, knew what was meant by it. Bismarck had on the 15th informed Bernstorff (in a rescript soon afterwards made public) that the Treaty of 1852, after the many violations which it had undergone, was no longer binding upon Germany. And he

had telegraphed to the plenipotentiary, on the same day, that he was ordered by the King to state that the actual object of the policy of Prussia was the total severance of the two nationalities, the dynastic question, which was of only secondary importance to Prussia, being kept in reserve; but that, in order to reach this end, the plan of a personal union between Denmark and the duchies must in the first instance be considered, but not allowed to be adopted, though its failure must not appear to be attributable to Prussian action or influence. Rechberg, though in favour of the personal union, had, in view of the unpopularity of this expedient in Germany, consented that it should not be expressly mentioned in the declaration. Bernstorff's declaration, therefore, left the Conference completely in the dark, nor was its perplexity much relieved by his further statement that the lawful sovereignty of the duchies remained a question for elucidation—so that the solution of a personal union was for the present neither rejected nor approved. Clearly, the reason for this lay in the fact that Austria and Prussia were not agreed on this head. Hereupon, the Danish plenipotentiaries eagerly rejected the German proposals, even in the event of Christian IX being declared the legitimate successor in the duchies. The Conference adjourned; and, though Bernstorff's proposal had failed, Bismarck's design had been carried a step further. For the idea of the personal union was now dead; even Austria accepted this fact; and Russell informed Bernstorff that at the next meeting of the Conference he would propose on behalf of Great Britain the adoption of a partition according to nationalities as the only practical solution of the problem.

Thus, though at the next sitting of the Conference (May 28th), the external situation remained unaltered, the outlook on the future had become a very different one. The idea of a personal union having received its *quietus*,

Bismarck could in his communications with Rechberg treat the Schleswig-Holstein succession as an entirely open question, to be virtually decided by the two Great German Powers between them. The Augustenburg claims were, no doubt, in the forefront, if trustworthy guarantees of a really conservative government could be secured in this quarter. But there were also the Oldenburg claims, which Grand-duke Peter had hitherto considerately refrained from press-ing. And there was the proposal of annexation to Prussia, no longer without support in the duchies themselves. Of course, the military protection of northern Germany and the creation of a German maritime power could be secured without annexation by means of limitations of the sovereign authority of the new ruler of the duchies and modifications of the existing Federal law. What did the Austrian Government think as to these various ways?

It seemed that Austrian statesmanship had, in full accordance with public opinion in the empire, quite made up its mind that the best, and indeed the only, way was to support the candidate of the duchies themselves and of Holstein in particular, who was also the candidate of the secondary states and of the large majority of the German nation. Annexation to Prussia was wholly repugnant to Austrian feeling; and the Augustenburg agent at Vienna (W. E. O. von Wydenbrugk, one of the most active ad-versaries of Bismarck's Schleswig-Holstein policy) was informed that Austrian support of the claims of Duke Frederick depended on his refusing to accept any restrictions of his sovereign power without consulting Austria, who was in favour of the complete independence of that authority. At the same time, Rechberg, on a strong remonstrance by Bismarck, did not insist upon the passing at Frankfort of a motion in favour of the Augustenburg claims by which Beust was anxious to strengthen them.

Inasmuch as the eventual recognition of Augustenburg

by the Diet of the Confederation seemed certain and his succession was favoured by the vast majority of the population of the duchies, the Prussian plenipotentiaries, at the sitting of the Conference on May 28th, sailing as near the wind as seemed possible, proposed a resolution for the establishment of Schleswig-Holstein as an independent state under the Hereditary Prince of Augustenburg. Prussia, while abstaining from declaring her own recognition of his rights, had thus, as it were, given the popular candidate the first chance, while, in the extremely probable event of no conclusion being reached by the Conference, retaining liberty of action. Hereupon, in accordance with the procedure agreed upon, Russell brought forward the British counter-proposal, of which the object was to save at least the Danish and the mixed districts of Schleswig for Christian IX, and which, as is truly observed by Émile Ollivier in his review of these transactions[1], would, had it been adopted in 1852, have saved infinite trouble. Schleswig was to be divided by a line running from the mouth of the Schlei to the Dannevirke. The destiny of the German portion was not to be decided without the assent of its population; but (to this clause the German plenipotentiaries at once demurred) no fortresses or harbours of war were to be constructed there, and there was to be no further German intervention in the affairs of Denmark. The Prussian proposal having been rejected, by all except the German votes, the British remained. It was not refused in principle by the Germans, although they took exception to the frontier-line proposed; and, in the interval before the next sitting of the Conference, the Danes likewise accepted the principle of partition, so that the question actually at issue had now narrowed itself to the delimitation of the frontier—though Russia had taken the opportunity of the extinction of the provisions of the Treaty of 1852 to revive the Gottorp

[1] *L'Empire Libéral*, vol. VII, p. 96.

claims, the whole of which Tsar Alexander had graciously transferred to the Grand-ducal, or Oldenburg, line.

At the sitting of the Conference on June 1st, no progress was made, though there was much altercation, on the subject of the frontier-line, which Bernstorff would have fixed further north (say Flensburg-Tondern) and the Danes wished to fix as far south as Eckernförde-Friedrichstadt; and the Danes, still trusting in the security of their islands, since Great Britain would permit no Austrian men-of-war to enter the Baltic, were not even disposed to a prolongation of the armistice, though (at the sitting on the 6th) they reluctantly consented to its continuance till the 25th. Meanwhile, in Schleswig the feeling was strong against the partition; even in the northern, Danish-speaking, part of the duchy a large public meeting protested against it. In Germany, a widespread agitation to the same end was set on foot, and not less than 350 protests to the same effect were delivered by legislatures, associations and meetings through the length and breadth of the land[1]. Neither at Frankfort nor at Berlin was the proposal considered acceptable; and the Prussian Government would not listen to the conditions by which it had been accompanied. On the other hand, negotiations had begun with the 'Hereditary Prince,' as he was still called at Berlin; and on June 1st he had had an interview there with Bismarck (as well as more than one with the Crown-prince), which led to no satisfactory result. The well-intentioned and highminded, but far from politic, Augustenburger was dutifully staunch to the principles impressed upon him by his Liberal advisers: without the approval of the Schleswig-Holstein legislatures he could consent to no diminution of either the dominions or the sovereign authority inherited by him; for the rest, he desired to be treated with proper confidence. Bismarck had not the slightest intention of adopting any such line of

[1] Klüpfel, *Einheitsbestrebungen*, vol. 1, p. 354.

action, and made no secret to Rechberg of his regarding the personal question as of quite secondary importance in the settlement of the future of the duchies; there was no present reason for shutting the door against the Oldenburg claims. While Rechberg cautiously held his hand, Tsar Alexander, who about this time (June 9th) passed through Berlin, showed himself gratified by the attitude of Prussia; nevertheless, a week later, Christian IX received a Russian dispatch urging him even now to accept the personal union. The Danish King and Crown-prince were fain to consent, though their opportunity had probably passed; but the Ministers opposed, and, when the King persisted, resigned in a body. It proved, however, impossible to form a new Government from the Moderates or otherwise; and, Monrad and his colleagues having returned to office, the Danish plenipotentiaries in London were instructed to accept the British proposal in the last instance, but to accept it only *in toto*.

At the sitting of June 18th, the imperturbable Bernstorff astonished the Conference by a new move, the object of which can hardly have been any other than that of preserving the goodwill of France. On June 14th Drouyn de Lhuys had addressed to the French ambassador in London the notorious, almost cynical, dispatch, in which the question had been put whether France, on whom the burden of a war against the German Powers would fall, had anything to gain from an alliance with Great Britain for the purpose[1]. Now, the Emperor's desire was to apply his cherished expedient of the *plébiscite* in Schleswig not only to the question of nationality and the consequent desire of the population to be Danish or German subjects, but also, in the German portion, to the actual choice of sovereign. Though the Prussian proposal was confined to

[1] See the caustic chapter *La Question Danoise* in G. Rothan, *La Politique Française en* 1866 (1884).

the former purpose, it met, virtually, with no approval—except a conditional one on the part of the first French plenipotentiary. The Austrian dissent was ingeniously wrapped up, but unmistakable. The proposal had thus fallen to the ground; but the Danes and their friends had been obliged to show their distrust of popular feeling. This was perceived by the British cabinet, which made one more attempt to save the situation before the Conference and the armistice alike came to an end. Russell's colleague at the Conference, Clarendon—and it is not the least of his titles to honourable remembrance—had, at the Paris Peace Conference in 1856, succeeded in inducing the signatory Powers to place on record their 'wish' that states between which a serious difference may arise shall, before taking up arms, so far as circumstances may allow, have recourse to the good offices of a friendly Power. Applying this principle, Russell now proposed that the German Powers and Denmark should make appeal to a friendly Power, to designate a frontier-line which should neither be north of the boundary desired by Germany nor south of that desired by Denmark; and, extending the principle of his Paris declaration, Clarendon added that the intention was to make the decision of the friendly Power *ipso facto* binding upon the belligerents. It was afterwards understood, but not stated at the time, that France was the Power in the minds of the British statesmen.

Before the sitting of June 22nd, which was to decide on this last British attempt to bring about a peaceful solution, the Emperor Francis Joseph and Rechberg had met King William and Bismarck at Carlsbad, where the discrepancy between their views had become very manifest. Rechberg was for accepting the arbitration, which would signify peace; Bismarck, who knew that peace would signify the Augustenburg succession, was for rejecting it. Ultimately, it was agreed to do both—in other words, to accept it, but

in a form rendering it ineffectual. In Copenhagen, where diplomacy was under democratic control, it was resolved, though the King and even Hall were for acceptance, to reject the arbitration proposal.

Thus, at the sitting of the Conference on June 22nd, three days before the expiration of the armistice, the British proposal of mediation was approved by the German Powers, provided that the decision of the mediating Power had no binding force, and provided that this Power was not one of those represented at the Conference. The Danish refusal had been known beforehand; so that the farce had been played out, though angry words followed, and La Tour d'Auvergne, in order to make the good intentions of his Government manifest, now proposed that the inhabitants of the mixed districts of Schleswig should vote as to their nationality, the presence of no military force being allowed during the *plébiscite*. The Danish plenipotentiaries declined to go back from the line proposed by Great Britain on May 28th, and, as at present advised, refused to consider a prolongation of the armistice.

The sitting of June 25th was purely formal; on the previous day, however, the two Great German Powers had concluded a compact, the outcome of the Carlsbad discussions at the interviews between Emperor and King, by which not only had the plan of campaign been settled in outline, but it had been resolved to call upon the Confederation to agree to a joint administration of both duchies, and to inform the Great Powers that with the reopening of the war all former concessions as to the partition of Schleswig fell to the ground.

During the armistice, Wrangel had been succeeded in command of the allied armies by Prince Frederick Charles, who adopted the plan now urged by Moltke of a simultaneous landing in Fünen and Alsen. With a view to this, it was arranged that on June 25th the Ist corps should be ready at Gravenstein in the Sundewitt, the IInd at Kolding and

the IIIrd at Randers; and these were their actual positions on that day. But the consent of the Austrians to a landing on Fünen could not be obtained; and, in the compact signed on June 24th at Carlsbad, it had been settled that Alsen and Jutland north of the Liim fiord should be occupied, but no troops be landed in Fünen, the allies to administer Jutland, as well as Schleswig and Holstein, in common. Prince Frederick Charles was accordingly informed that there must be no landing in Fünen.

Before the armistice ended, the Danish Government instructed its Commander-in-chief that his task must be to defend Fünen, Alsen and the part of Jutland north of the Liim fiord. The Danish army was disposed so as to have four brigades in Fünen, three in Alsen and two in north Jutland.

Elaborate preparations had again been made by the Prussian troops for a landing in Alsen, and, on June 27th, General Herwarth von Bittenfeld, who had charge of the operation, determined not to attempt the crossing of the Augustenburg Föhrde from Ballegaard to Meels, but, instead, to cross the northern part of the much narrower Alsen sound. He had ready two divisions, 24,000 men, double the strength of the whole Danish force in Alsen. The Danish troops had to be scattered, in order to guard a number of points. Two battalions stood in the peninsula of Meels, four in reserve near Wollerup and six watching the Alsen sound, of which four guarded its southern and two its northern half. The Prussians had prepared four points of embarkation and four columns of boats and pontoons, together ferrying over 2500 men at a time. The start was made on June 29th at 2.0 a.m.; and the Danes, having no knowledge of the preparations, were completely surprised, not a sentry having seen the boats till they were halfway across, when it was too late to make any counter-moves. The first batch of Prussians easily overpowered and drove off the two battalions guarding the northern

portion of the Kjar peninsula; and, as fresh Prussian troops were constantly ferried across, their force was soon far superior to any that could be brought against them. The Danes were driven back to the south-east coast of the island, where they embarked in transports, the first batch at Hörup-Haff, the remainder at Kekeris, and were conveyed to Fünen. The Prussians had 370 casualties, the Danes 700, and 2500 Danes were taken prisoners.

On the expiration of the armistice the IIIrd corps pushed a portion of its troops beyond Liim fiord and occupied the remainder of Jutland, the Danish troops retiring by sea to Fünen. A skirmish at the village of Lundby, on July 3rd, revealed to the Prussians the greatness of the advantage derived by them from the breech-loading rifle. A company of 190 Danes attempted to charge 184 Prussians lying behind the protection of a hedge. In a few minutes the Danes lost 3 officers and 85 men.

During July, the Austrian and Prussian fleets, with the aid of small expeditions of troops from the mainland, occupied the islands lying off the western coast of Schleswig-Holstein, which were defended with skill and courage by the Danish captain Hammer, with a couple of small steamers and eight small boats each carrying 22 men and a gun. Hammer's small force was eventually surrounded and compelled to surrender.

The landing in Alsen was a great blow to the Danes, whose security depended on their fleet. The allies, from the first, had recognised the impracticability of disputing the Danish command of the sea, and the Danes had felt themselves protected by their fleet against any attack on their island homes. The unexpected descent upon Alsen showed that the fleet could not prevent the Prussians from crossing a narrow channel commanded by their guns. The Danes were therefore much alarmed by the demonstration that a landing in Fünen was actually probable, and their

faith in the inaccessibility of Zealand and Copenhagen was rudely shaken.

All hope of British assistance had finally disappeared with the debate in both Houses of Parliament (July 4th to 9th), which had ended with the approval, by a narrow majority, of a motion thanking the Queen for the preservation of peace[1]. Accordingly, on July 8th Monrad resigned, avowedly in order to enable the King to do the best he could for Denmark—in other words, to conclude peace. On the 9th a new Ministry was formed under C. A. Bluhme, which, on the 12th, proposed at Berlin and Vienna an armistice with a view to the opening of negotiations for peace. On the 20th the new armistice began.

Before this, the Prussian forces had pushed forward as far as Frederikshavn, and the Danish peninsula from its land's end was now in the hands of the foe. About the same time, an incident had occurred in Holstein which might have led to a serious conflict between the Prussian and the Federal forces. Since the end of May there had been much friction between the Federal and the Prussian troops which jointly occupied Rendsburg, where the Hanoverian colonel then in command had caused some Austrian and Prussian flags to be taken down. The incident had at first been treated by the Austrian and Prussian Governments as what it was, a piece of clumsy officiousness; but when, in July[2], a brawl had taken place between the Saxon and Hanoverian troops on the one side, and the Prussian on the other, and some

[1] Palmerston's speech was in the main confined to a statement of the commercial prosperity of the British empire. Those who heard it, whichever side commanded their sympathies, could hardly believe their ears. In the House of Lords, Clarendon stated that, after France and Russia had declined to interfere, Denmark had been repeatedly informed that she had no British aid to expect.

[2] F. von Friesen, *Erinnerungen aus meinem Leben*, vol. II, p. 99, in his account of the affair dates the brawl in June.

stones had been thrown at the windows of a Prussian military hospital, Bismarck deemed it necessary—or expedient—to take possession of the fortress. On July 21st General von Goeben, who had been ordered by Prince Frederick Charles to collect 6000 troops for the purpose, sent word to the Saxon General von Hake, Commander-in-chief of the Federal forces, that he proposed to enter and occupy the town at noon. Hereupon, the Federals, rather than be overpowered, marched out of the town[1]. A long negotiation ended, in November, with a concession to the wounded honour of the Confederation, six companies of its troops being received back into Rendsburg with military honours by the Prussian garrison.

Before July was out, Bismarck arrived at Vienna to discuss the bases of peace with Rechberg and Quaade, having previously secured the general assent of Gortchakoff to his proposals. At the same time, notwithstanding the objections taken by the Austrian Government, he continued to exercise pressure upon the Danes by continued preparations on the part of the Prussian troops for crossing to Fünen, in the event of a resumption of the war. Although the two Great Powers were at one neither in this matter nor on the succession question, yet they were alike unwilling to allow the Federal Diet a share in the discussion of the peace preliminaries, although, as Beust ruefully observes, it had 'not only legally but also logically the right to have a voice in the matter[2].' And, indeed, the enthusiasm for Augustenburg had begun to calm down at Frankfort, where the majority was ready to invite both him and the Grand-duke of Oldenburg to submit a legal justification of their

[1] Hake's discreet conduct was afterwards, and justly, approved by the Federal Diet.

[2] *Memoirs* (Engl. tr.), vol. 1, p. 267. It was at this time that Bismarck, by way of a cooling card, gave the above-mentioned order about Rendsburg.

claims. The question of the compensation of Austria and Prussia themselves had reached a serious stage, when the Peace Conference opened on July 25th.

Quaade's protest as to the hardship of the sacrifice demanded, and his and his colleague's attempt to insist once more on the legal aspect of the succession question, were alike waved aside, and no further objection was taken in principle to the cession to Austria and Prussia of the three duchies of Schleswig, Holstein and Lauenburg[1]. At the same time, Quaade pointed out the absolute impossibility of Denmark undertaking financial liabilities when deprived of so much territory. The Danish demand for the evacuation of Jutland, and finally that of the continuance of Danish civil administration there, were abandoned in the face of unmistakable menaces; and, on August 1st, the preliminaries of peace were signed on the bases aforesaid.

The further peace negotiations were carried on at Vienna after Bismarck's departure, by Werther, with Balan and Brenner, both formerly envoys at Copenhagen, as Prussian plenipotentiaries. Both Powers were agreed that the Confederation should be excluded from the negotiations; and Bismarck put a stop upon Beust's intention to propose at the Diet that its participation in the discussion of the succession question at least should not be refused. But the displeasure of the Bavarian Government and of those of other secondary states, and the desire of the Austrian not to strain its relations with them too far, were not to be ignored; and at Schönbrunn, where towards the end of August King William paid a return visit to the Emperor Francis Joseph, and where the future of the duchies was necessarily discussed between the sovereigns and their

[1] The Danish plenipotentiaries succeeded in securing the retention by Denmark of the small Jutish enclave of Ribe in the extreme north-west, and of a small district and island in the extreme north-east, south of Kolding, in lieu of the other Jutish enclaves.

Ministers, a distinct divergence once more made itself manifest. This was still rather between Bismarck and the Austrians, than between them and Bismarck's master, who had as yet made up his mind neither as to annexation nor as to Augustenburg. But on one point King William never wavered—he would on no consideration cede any part of his dominions, or accept an annexation accompanied by such conditions. Nor would he consent to a guarantee by Prussia of Austria's non-German concessions.

On August 28th, and again on September 6th, the Peace Conference met, and the share of the duchies in the debt of the Danish monarchy was finally fixed at 29 million Danish dollars (about £3,000,000). It should be pointed out that this 'compromise,' in addition to which the Austrian and Prussian Governments reserved to themselves the right of claiming repayment of the cost of the war from the duchies, in itself made it difficult for them to maintain their independence of one or both the Great Powers[1]. Various other outstanding points were settled: Rechberg's wish to carry through matters to a conclusion as rapidly as possible becoming evident. His position between Schmerling and Biegeleben, and in face of the unpopularity of the war in Austria, had become difficult, and was made more so by a matter which had already come to the front at Schönbrunn, and to which, in view of the direct consequences of the treatment received by it there, reference must be made. It will be remembered[2] how, in July 1862, Rechberg, who still looked forward to the entry of Austria into the *Zollverein*, summoned representatives of the German Governments to Vienna, to impress upon them the objections against the commercial treaty with France which Prussia had invited the *Zollverein* states to join. His arguments had failed to achieve their purpose; and even in the protectionist south-west there was a strong feeling in favour of joining the

[1] Klüpfel, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 355. [2] Cf. p. 79, *ante*.

reconstituted Customs Union. At a meeting between the representatives of these states and Austria in July 1864, it was merely agreed to bring about the conclusion of treaties between the *Zollverein* and Austria, with a view to the inclusion of the latter in the Union; and this agreement was communicated to the Prussian Government, with a peremptory demand for the opening of negotiations on the subject between the two Great Powers. Rechberg, though the tone of this communication was out of keeping with his own desire to uphold the Prussian alliance, at Schönbrunn expressed the hope that the new commercial treaty between the two Powers would include Article XXV of the Treaty of 1853[1], which provided that within twelve years negotiations should be renewed for a General German Customs Union including Austria. In view of Rechberg's statement that the refusal of these overtures would make his position in the Austrian Ministry untenable, both the King and Bismarck were willing to meet him halfway; but the real decision lay with M. F. R. Delbrück, director in the Ministry of Commerce. He was a free-trader, and to him was mainly due the hegemony which Prussia had secured in the commercial policy of the German states, so that he has not inaptly been called the Bismarck of German trade. Delbrück was opposed, root and branch, to the proposed concession to Austria, and threatened to resign his office, if anything like the obnoxious Article XXV were insisted on. Bismarck hereupon gave way, and a very interesting correspondence ensued between him and Rechberg, which went deeply into the nature of the relations between the two Great Powers. On the commercial question, to which Rechberg attributed a greater importance than Bismarck would allow to belong to it, the policy of Delbrück scored a notable success by the accession of Bavaria to the renewed *Zollverein* (Schrenck resigning *post hoc*, though King

[1] Cf. p. 78, *ante*.

Lewis II would not allow him to resign *propter hoc*); Württemberg (where Varnbüler became Minister) following suit. At the Conference held in Berlin all the states that had belonged to the *Zollverein* were duly represented.

Hereupon, Rechberg repeated his threat of resignation if the confirmation of the much-vext Article XXV were refused; and Bismarck urged his sovereign to avert Rechberg's fall, in view of the general political situation and of the danger that Prussia (for whom the pear was not yet quite ripe) would have to forgo any real advantage from the Schleswig-Holstein War. Much pressure was brought to bear on the Emperor Francis Joseph also to the same purpose; but the fall of the Austrian Foreign Minister had become inevitable. The long-simmering discontent at the deference shown by Austria to her ally in Schleswig-Holstein had at last blazed up, and the *Reichsrat* quarrelled with the expenditure which the war had occasioned. Schmerling's opportunity for overthrowing his rival had arrived. Before a definitive answer as to Article XXV had come from Berlin, where Rechberg had not improved the chances of its acceptance by asking that (contrary to the intentions of Prussia) part of the Federal troops might be left in the duchies, his position had become untenable at Vienna. Schmerling had let loose the Liberal press upon him, nor was it overlooked that at this very time Bismarck was in conference with Napoleon III, and that the isolation of Austria in European politics was perhaps being rendered complete. Rechberg and Schmerling, accordingly, informed the Emperor that he must part with one or other of them; and, on October 27th, Rechberg, who had enemies at court, was dismissed. But the Emperor Francis Joseph, who always reserved to himself the choice of his Ministers, let it be known on this occasion that he had no desire to change his system of policy—in other words that he proposed to adhere to the Prussian alliance; and the statesman whom he chose

as Rechberg's successor, was not Beust, who was suggested, for whom, however, the hour had not yet come, but Count Alexander Mensdorff-Pouilly, hitherto Governor of Galicia and a general in the army, a conservative and in favour with the King of Prussia. At the same time, the Emperor could hardly provide against Mensdorff's falling under the anti-Prussian influence of Biegeleben; and the inclusion in the new Government of Count Maurice Esterházy, who remained a Minister without portfolio, added to it an incalculable, but steadily anti-Prussian, element.

Rechberg's fall counts for something in the change which before long was to befall the relations between the two German Great Powers, though not till after they had, to outward seeming, become even closer than before. He thought, and as it proved rightly, that, from a military point of view, Austria was not strong enough to carry on war against Prussia, and he, therefore, held it best to go with her in the Schleswig-Holstein question, with a view to her ultimately obtaining the duchies in return for a guarantee of Austria's Italian dominions: his hope, as he confessed to Bismarck, was for a joint Austro-Prussian war against France. But, although he was a Minister of vigilant intelligence, and had the unity of German political action at heart, he was not cast in the mould of a statesman who helps to determine the future of great nations, or is capable of arresting the currents of opinion and sentiment by which they are impelled. He was anything but a tool of Bismarck's; but neither was he in any sense equal to the task of going just so far as he chose with his great Prussian colleague—and no further[1].

Three days after the dismissal of Rechberg, the Treaty of Peace between Denmark and the two German Great

[1] See Appendix to H. Friedjung, *Der Kampf um die Vorherrschaft* (Stuttgart, 1897–8), vol. II, pp. 524 ff. for Rechberg's remarkable conversations with the author.

Powers was signed at Vienna. Christian IX renounced all his claims on the three duchies of Schleswig, Holstein and Lauenburg, which he ceded to Austria and Prussia, recognising by anticipation whatever dispositions they might choose to make with regard to the ceded dominions. The aspirations of the two duchies for self-government were, so far as the Treaty of Peace went, passed over in silence. On the other hand, it contained no reference to the Danish-speaking or mixed districts in northern Schleswig. All these things were left in the hands of the conquerors.

In Copenhagen, where the *Rigsdag* was assembled to be informed of the conclusion of peace, the *Folkething* may be excused for its vote implying, without expressing, its wrath. Its humiliation was not really so deep as that of the Germanic Diet, which had entered into the war as the legitimate agent of the national will, and which was now obliged to withdraw its troops from the liberated lands.

Inasmuch as the Austrian Government, even before Rechberg's fall, had declined to join Prussia in a request to the Diet for the removal of the Saxon and Hanoverian troops from Holstein, Prussia made the demand on her own account. Hanover agreed; but Saxony declined to withdraw her troops, on the ground that their mission was not yet fulfilled. Prussia, therefore, kept back in Schleswig-Holstein 20,000 men of her field-army besides the garrison of about the same strength, which it was intended to leave permanently in the duchies. In November, Prussia and Austria laid the Treaty of Vienna before the Diet, and, on December 1st, proposed the withdrawal of the Executive force. This resolution was carried, whereupon the Saxon troops were withdrawn, being taken round through Hanover, Hesse and Bavaria; and the Prussian field-troops till then retained in Holstein were sent home.

CHAPTER III

THE RUPTURE BETWEEN AUSTRIA AND PRUSSIA

If the war which severed Schleswig-Holstein from Denmark had been carried on by a process bitterly resented by the German secondary states, and unsatisfactory to Liberal opinion in the nation at large, the peace which terminated that war had at least freed the duchies from the foreign yoke to which Holstein and the greater part of Schleswig had been long subjected, and had thus fulfilled a deeply-cherished national aspiration. An intolerable series of failures and disappointments had, at last, ended in victory; and a change had, in consequence, come over public feeling that must be regarded as an element in the sequence of events which culminated in the national triumph of 1870. How speedily this change set in, is illustrated by two letters addressed, in May 1864 and April 1865 respectively, to Queen Victoria by her kinsman Prince Chlodwig zu Hohenlohe-Schillingsfürst, now Bavarian *Reichsrat* and future Chancellor of the German Empire[1]. The Queen, *désorientée* by recent events, and no longer able to appeal to marital guidance, could have found no more clear-sighted instructor than her kinsman, who knew and understood Germany, both north and south. In the summer of 1864, he reported, public feeling had virtually become absorbed

[1] They are printed in the Prince's *Denkwürdigkeiten* (1907), vol. I, pp. 139–147.

in the Schleswig-Holstein question. The Germans, he said —and said truly—were, naturally, a people that held by the law—indeed, he might have added they have only one word for 'law' and 'right'—and no grievance came home to them so nearly as one with a legal basis. He added that the Schleswig-Holstein movement had been so popular in the secondary states, with their nineteen millions of inhabitants, because throughout they, for the first time, had seemed called upon to take part in the settlement of a problem of European policy. But when, by the Peace of Vienna and the transactions which ensued, Austria and Prussia had arrogated that settlement to themselves, the problem, as the year 1865 went on, became one of might, not right; and the wider and more difficult problem of the future of Germany once more confronted the nation.

Up to the peace and the dismissal of Rechberg, the Austrian Government had adhered to a policy of cooperation with Prussia and refused to join the secondary states in recognising the Augustenburg claims. With the new responsibility incurred by Austria through the terms of the peace, a cautious policy might have seemed imposed upon her, more especially since, on September 15th, 1864, a treaty had been signed between France and Italy, providing for the withdrawal of the French troops from Rome within two years, during which Italy would leave the Papal Government unharassed; and a secret guarantee of French assistance, in case of an Austrian attack upon Italy, was supposed to have accompanied the treaty. About the same time, Roon and other Prussian officers were treated with great courtesy on the occasion of Emperor Napoleon's reception of them in the camp at Châlons[1]. But, notwithstanding these more or less ominous signs, the Emperor

[1] La Marmora, *Un po' più di luce*, pp. 33–4. See also Roon, *Denkwürdigkeiten*, vol. II, p. 275, where the meeting is said to have been King William's idea.

Francis Joseph desired a clear exposition of Austrian policy with regard to the duchies; and, since Mensdorff was still something of a novice in these matters, Biegeleben was charged with the task and executed it in a series of three dispatches addressed to the Prussian Government. In these, annexation to Prussia and the establishment of a new semi-sovereign state were waived aside, and it was laid down that the succession to the conjoint and independent duchy should be settled by legal process under the supervision of the Confederation. Failing a completely satisfactory result, Austria and Prussia would transfer the duchies to the claimant best entitled to succeed; and, since the Oldenburg claims had no foundation, this seemed to be Augustenburg, as had already been made plain to the London Conference[1]. Simple, almost *naïf*, as this statement might appear to be, it hardly had the virtue of sincerity; for Karolyi was at the same time instructed to let it be known at Berlin that Austria would not object to a Prussian annexation of the duchies, if a satisfactory territorial compensation could be found for her. A mere money-payment was out of the question; but a cession suggested itself, such as that of the Silesian county of Glatz.

Biegeleben's dispatches had been crossed by one from Bismarck, demanding the withdrawal of the Federal troops from Holstein. As has been seen, Austria ultimately joined at the Diet in this demand, which was carried out before the end of the year. But the joint responsibilities, on which the two Great Powers now entered in both duchies, implied no harmony of purpose; and no stage of the Schleswig-Holstein question proved more thorny than that of the months following upon the peace which proclaimed their 'liberation.' Prussia, though her declaration was on record that the Treaty of 1852 was no longer binding on the German Powers[2], persisted in regarding herself and

[1] Cf. p. 173, *ante*. [2] Cf. p. 170, *ante*.

Austria as the lawful successors of the lawful sovereign of the duchies. Austria, after first taking the same view, while like Prussia continuing bound by the punctation of January 1864, which required the two Powers to preserve the integrity of the Danish monarchy, unless in pursuance of a mutual understanding between them, now, except in the event of a satisfactory bargain with Prussia, once more leant to the Augustenburg claims. And the secondary states, which commanded a majority at the Diet, adhered more or less firmly to Augustenburg. The Hanoverian Government, indeed, had no goodwill to spare for Duke Frederick, whom, because of his acceptance of the Danish constitutional law of 1848, it regarded as a democrat—he was, in truth, a Liberal of the oldest and most temperate sort[1]; and Oldenburg had its own pretensions to push. But in Bavaria, though Bismarck was still hopeful that the Prussian sympathies of von der Pfordten, now once more at the head of the Ministry, would dispose him to yield to the tempting offer of the military command in the south, King and people were for Augustenburg. As to Saxony, with its counsels guided by the protagonist of the Diet, Beust, there could be no manner of doubt; nor as to Württemberg (though Varnbüler personally inclined to Prussia); nor as to Baden, where, however, Roggenbach, who was still in power, and who had identified himself with the Augustenburg interests, was prepared to urge concessions on the part of Duke Frederick which might reconcile Prussia to his accession.

Accordingly, Bismarck, convinced that the French Emperor, who seemed favourable to a Prussian annexation of the duchies (except the Danish districts of northern Schleswig), was really looking forward to a rupture between

[1] Count Platen's influence, as a member of the Holstein landed nobility, was against Augustenburg. See F. von der Wengen, *Kriegsereignisse zwischen Preussen und Hannover*, p. 81.

the German Great Powers, still played for delay and the maintenance of the *provisorium*. Annexation, or at least the establishment of a Schleswig-Holstein state under conditions rendering it in essentials dependent upon Prussia, was the end which he, more and more openly, pursued; but, since Prussia could not annex without the consent of Austria, it appeared better to wait and, while submitting to Austria a *minimum* of the concessions which would satisfy her partner in the event of the establishment of a new state, provide for the testing of the claims to its sovereignty belonging, severally, to Augustenburg, Oldenburg—and Brandenburg-Prussia! After this had been done, by calling, on December 14th, for an opinion from the Prussian Crown-syndicate, the Prussian *minimum* requirements were at last, on February 22nd, sent to Vienna. They comprised the inclusion of Schleswig-Holstein in the *Zollverein*, and of its postal and telegraphic system in the Prussian. Prussia was to have the supervision of the canal to be constructed between North Sea and Baltic; and Friedrichsort, Sonderburg-Düppel and the mouths of the canal were to be placed in her hands. Rendsburg was to become a Federal fortress with a Prussian garrison. Finally, the Schleswig-Holstein military and naval forces were to be incorporated in the Prussian army and navy, and to swear allegiance to the King of Prussia as their war-lord.

The Austrian Government flatly refused to approve these conditions, which, in a dispatch of March 5th, Mensdorff formally declared to be absolutely irreconcilable with Federal law. This meant the prolongation of the provisional condition of things, which was quite in accordance with what Bismarck wished; and, for a time, the *condominium* of the two Great Powers continued in the duchies, inhabited as they were by a population, and administered by officers, of whom the large majority desired

to see both Powers turned out. To the Prussian Commissioner (formerly for Schleswig only), Freiherr von Zedlitz, was now joined the Austrian, Baron Halbhuber, formerly Governor of Lower Galicia. The patriotic agitation rapidly spread from Holstein into Schleswig; and, though there were signs of the gradual formation of a party favourable to the Prussian designs in the duchies, more especially among the landed Holstein nobility, which might well dread the financial burdens autonomy would entail, this minority was all but lost in the constant flow of enthusiasm for Augustenburg kept up by the press, which the Austrian Commissioner could not see his way to take part in restraining. Still, the issue was becoming less certain. While at a general meeting of delegates of Schleswig-Holstein associations (February 26th) a majority of 120 to 88 declined to contemplate any kind of junction with Prussia, the Committee deputed by this very gathering to discuss the situation with the Frankfort Committee of Thirty-six and certain of the leaders of the Prussian *Fortschritt* party recognised some of the Prussian February conditions as reasonable, though the acceptance of them must be preceded by the enthronement of Duke Frederick VIII. Bismarck, true to the step-by-step policy which he vigilantly pursued, was thus encouraged to entertain the idea of summoning the Estates of the duchies, and laying the Prussian case before them.

Meanwhile, the tension increased, and the chances of a peaceable solution of the problem in the Prussian sense were passing away. On March 27th, 1865, Bavaria, Saxony and Hesse-Darmstadt joined in a resolution at the Diet expressing the confident expectation that Austria and Prussia would make over the administration of the duchies to the Duke of Augustenburg. In conformity with a motion of urgency carried by Austria against Prussia, the resolution was, on April 6th, put to the vote and carried;

the Austrian plenipotentiary adding to his affirmative vote a declaration that Austria was prepared to resign her claims on Schleswig-Holstein to the Duke, so soon as Prussia took the same step. The Augustenburg agitation, encouraged by Halbhuber, in consequence grew apace; and Prussia, still proposing to summon the Estates of the duchies, opined that the 'Hereditary Prince' should absent himself during the elections, a measure which Austria in her turn pronounced reasonable, but not one that could be enforced. Before long, Austria demanded, and Prussia refused, the reduction of the Prussian town garrisons in the duchies to 10,000 men. In Bavaria, and elsewhere, the convocation of the Schleswig-Holstein Estates was strongly approved; and the word went round that no candidate should be elected on the occasion who was not in favour of the proclamation of Duke Frederick VIII at the first sitting of the body. In Baden, the controversy between annexationists and Augustenburgers was carried on with the utmost ardour by two very redoubtable literary combatants, Ludwig Häusser and Heinrich von Treitschke[1].

Thus, the crisis seemed to be becoming acute; for Prussia held to her purpose, while Austria's action continued to run counter to it. How could this *provisorium*, both particular and general, be indefinitely prolonged? In Berlin, a Ministerial Council was held on May 29th, to arrive, if possible, at a decision on the question whether

[1] See the first essay in Treitschke's *Zehn Jahre Deutscher Kämpfe*, 1865–1874. It was the Schleswig-Holstein crisis of this year which effected his transition from the standpoint of one who believed in the destinies of Prussia, but strongly disapproved of her internal government, to that of her most thoroughgoing champion as a patriotic publicist. But it is to his honour that, when, in 1866, he removed from Freiburg, in the first instance to Berlin, and Bismarck twice sought to secure his services, he declined to bind himself, and retained his freedom as editor of the *Preussische Jahrbücher*, in which, and in the *Grenzboten*, his earliest literary successes had been gained.

the concessions demanded on February 22nd, modified perhaps by omitting the requirement of the military oath to the King of Prussia from the Schleswig-Holstein troops, or annexation, should be the choice[1]. Bismarck, supported by Roon and Moltke, spoke strongly in favour of annexation at the risk of war, and nearly all the Ministers signified their assent. But the Crown-prince (whose pacific views were known to be shared by his Consort, as well as by the Queen and the Queen Dowager) was strongly opposed to annexation, which meant fratricidal war in Germany and foreign intervention. As the King, whose position must be allowed to have been one of extreme perplexity, reserved his decision, the result of the Council amounted to the maintenance of the February demands without abatement. The die had not yet been cast; but, from this time forward, Bismarck laid his plans, and Moltke and Roon continued to shape their preparations, for war.

In Austria, the difficulties were of another sort. The condition of the empire was palpably such that, unless a speedy decision by the sword were deliberately sought, it was wiser, instead of pushing the dispute with Prussia to extremes, to take advantage of King William's unwillingness to provoke a conflict in arms. On June 27th, 1865, the *Reichsrat* had passed a resolution deprecating the issue of imperial ordinances without its consent under a special clause of the constitution, and had granted only a fraction of the loan demanded by the Ministry. A Ministerial crisis had, hereupon, declared itself. The elements of disturbance had been for some time gathering. While the

[1] Both the minutes (protocol) of this Council, and those of the even more important one of February 28th, 1866 (see p. 212, *post*), were taken by Moltke, and are to be found in the Appendix to vol. III of O. von Lettow-Vorbeck's *Geschichte des Krieges von* 1866 *in Deutschland* (1902). Sybel's accounts are paraphrases, the exactitude of which is contested by Lettow-Vorbeck.

Čechs and other Cisleithanian Slavs held aloof, Eduard Herbst and other German Liberals had delivered a series of attacks in the *Reichsrat* upon the Ministry, both as to finance (the perpetual difficulty of Austrian Governments) and because of Schmerling's unwillingness to propose a law asserting the principle of Ministerial responsibility; and the Hungarian constitutional party under Deák seemed inclined to make common cause against the unlucky Minister with Count Maurice Esterházy and the Ultramontanes, who resented Schmerling's religious Liberalism, and his treatment of the first signals of the great papal campaign—the Encyclica and Syllabus of 1864—as virtually expressions of private opinion. Undoubtedly, Rechberg's adhesion to the Prussian alliance had contributed to weaken the Ministry, and though Schmerling's desire was to remain on good terms with the secondary states, and accordingly to promote the Augustenburg claims, Mensdorff was without a definite policy of his own. Thus, public opinion was in an unsettled state, and Schmerling fell. With him, Archduke Rainer and the other Ministers, except Mensdorff and General Ritter von Franck, hitherto Minister of War, resigned; and a new Government was formed under Count Belcredi, hitherto Governor of Bohemia, a federalist who intended to govern without a parliament, but a statesman without constructive power. Esterházy remained a member of the *Grafenministerium*, as the new Government was popularly called. Before long, the new Government showed its colours by the suspension of the constitution of February 1861 (September 20th) and the recognition of the Hungarian constitution of 1848; the Court took up its residence at Budapest, as if there lay the centre of the monarchy, while the *Reichsrat* remained dissolved. While the empire was passing through a crisis which only a *coup d'état* had been held capable of averting, it would manifestly have been more than hazardous to put the existing

controversy with Prussia to the touch of war. It is creditable to Esterházy's insight that he should have used his influence in this sense; for he had no love for Prussia, whatever may have been his admiration for Bismarck's methods. Moreover, no equivalent had yet been found for Austria, if Prussia were to take both the duchies[1].

The Austrian envoy at Munich, Count Blome, a Holsteiner by birth, had, after being at first opposed to the Augustenburg claims and then advocating them as a diplomat, arrived at the plain conclusion that the easiest way out of the dilemma was a partition of the duchies between the two joint occupants. Blome was a man of much ability, adverse to anything that savoured of particularism or democracy; and thus he inclined to the maintenance of the Prussian alliance, as Rechberg had before him. It was accordingly resolved to charge him with a special mission to King William, in order if possible to induce him to recognise the Augustenburg claims and, if he refused, to suggest a scheme of partition between the Powers in possession (July 26th).

Of the former solution there was little or no chance. While the Austrian Government was drifting back into cooperation with Prussia, King William, with the cognisance of his ally, had written a letter, courteous in form, to Duke Frederick, requesting him to quit the duchies, but had met with a refusal. On June 30th, the King had called upon the Emperor Francis Joseph to demand the expulsion of the pretender, whose birthday (July 6th) had to be celebrated very quietly, except for a rousing speech in the Kiel *aula* by Professor Forchhammer, the most indefatigable of the academical supporters of the House of Augustenburg. Armed measures were actually taken into consideration by the Prussian Government; overtures to

[1] For a summary of these events and transactions see H. Friedjung, *Der Kampf um die Vorherrschaft*, etc., vol. I (1897), pp. 112 ff.

France and Italy were set on foot; and an *ultimatum* to Austria insisting on the establishment of 'order' in the duchies was prepared. Such was the policy in contemplation, when King William, accompanied by Bismarck and Manteuffel, betook himself to Gastein. On the way, Bismarck had an interview at Salzburg (July 23rd) with von der Pfordten, to whom he indicated that it lay with Bavaria to inherit the position of Austria in southern Germany. About this very time, the Prussian Crown-syndicate presented its opinion on the Schleswig-Holstein succession question, which put an end to all hesitation on the subject on the part of King William and his Government. The large majority of the eminent jurists who formed the syndicate, including the reporter, the famous jurist Heffter[1], were, Sybel points out, as independent in position as was any member of the sixteen faculties of law in the universities which had pronounced in favour of the Augustenburg claims. And indeed, as a matter of fact, the Crown-syndics were by no means at one, even on the main issue. Heffter's report was approved, with actual or virtual unanimity, so far as it pronounced that the Brandenburg claims (which went back to the Elector Joachim I and an expectancy confirmed by the Emperor Maximilian I in 1517) could not be taken into account till after the extinction of the House of Oldenburg[2]; while the Gottorp claims had come to an end by renunciations. But his contention

[1] A. W. Heffter, member of the Supreme Justicial Tribunal and of the *Herrenhaus* at Berlin, was called upon in these years for his opinion in several other political, as well as legal, questions of moment.

[2] At the London Conference (1864) the Russian plenipotentiary had declared that, in consequence of the London Treaty of 1852 having become invalid, these claims had revived, but were by the Tsar transferred to the Grand-duke of Oldenburg. Grand-duke Peter had then formally laid them before the Diet (June 23rd, 1864). Whether, after this, the Grand-duke really counted on Bismarck's support of his claims, is uncertain. On June 1st and 2nd, he had

as to the more important question of the Augustenburg claims was neither decisively stated nor received with approval by the majority of his colleagues. Heffter considered that the compact into which Duke Christian August had entered[1] was binding on him and his descendants during his life-time; but that, after his death, Duke Frederick (the present claimant) would not be bound by the paternal promise, and that Austria and Prussia would then be entitled to consider his claims to the dominions of which the disposal was in their hands. The majority of the Crown-syndics, on the other hand, took the view that Austria and Prussia were in no case bound to recognise any claims conflicting with the law of succession promulgated in 1853 for the entire Danish monarchy; and, as if to make assurance doubly sure, the same majority pronounced that the Augustenburg claims themselves were invalid, inasmuch as Duke Christian August's undertaking bound his successors for all time.

Henceforth, there was for Bismarck and his master no going back. Accordingly, when negotiations were opened with Blome at Gastein, it was soon made clear to him that nothing could be done with or for Augustenburg; so that, after Oldenburg had been discussed and put aside, he could broach his scheme of a joint sovereignty with a divided administration. From Gastein, Blome passed on to Ischl, to report to the Emperor Francis Joseph, who returned to

interviews with King William and his Minister at Berlin, of the results of which little is known. At Gastein, Bismarck seems once more to have put forward the Oldenburg claims against Blome's initial efforts for Augustenburg, but hardly with any serious intention. After Gastein, Grand-duke Peter seems to have given up all hope; but after the War of 1866 he received, by a compact with Prussia, a small territorial compensation in Holstein and the sum of a million dollars. See Oncken, 'Grossherzog Peter von Oldenburg' in *Historische und politische Aufsätze*, vol. II, pp. 68–73.

[1] Cf. p. 121, *ante*.

Vienna to consult his Ministers. There was, as always, a strong anti-Prussian party among them (Biegeleben was not consulted), which could reckon on much support in the army and in the public at large; but Esterházy threw the weight of his personal influence into the scale of those who shrank from risking a great war with an empty exchequer. Blome, therefore, came back to Gastein with an autograph letter from the Emperor Francis Joseph to King William, with whom and his Minister now actually lay the decision between securing temporarily an advantageous position in the north, and entering into a great but decisive war. There was as yet no dependence on Italy, or on the French Emperor, who vaguely approved of her awaiting the moment which had not yet come[1]; and there was good reason for showing Napoleon that the German Powers could manage their affairs for themselves. There was, moreover, von der Pfordten's civilities notwithstanding, very little doubt that the secondary states would, in case of a rupture on the Schleswig-Holstein question, side with Austria. When, therefore, on August 10th, Blome began his final negotiation at Gastein, and Prussia had declined to discuss any definitive settlement of the future of the duchies till order had been restored there—in other words till the Augustenburg pretender had been forced to take his departure—the proposal of a temporary revision of the existing *condominium* was at once discussed. The principle of the scheme was that the exercise of the rights conferred by the Peace of Vienna upon the two Powers should now pass, for Holstein to Austria, and for Schleswig to Prussia. This implied a final abandonment by Austria of the position that her and Prussia's occupation of the duchies

[1] La Marmora, p. 46. It is characteristic of the caution which Bismarck, when necessary, knew how to apply, that, for two months after Gastein, the Prussian envoy, Usedom, was invisible at Florence. *Ib.*, p. 47.

was only of the nature of a transitory arrangement, together with the acceptance of the principle that there had been a complete transfer of sovereignty by Denmark to the two Powers. They might agree to cede the duchies to some other ruler; but they, and they alone, were the guardians of the existing order of things. On the other hand, since Holstein was, in extent and otherwise, more considerable than Schleswig, and since Prussia's sacrifices in men and money in the course of the war had been very much larger than those of Austria, Prussia was entitled to compensations. After much discussion, she was granted two military roads and a telegraph-wire through Holstein, permission to construct a North Sea and Baltic canal (without rights of sovereignty over it), the command and garrison of the port of Kiel (which was to be Federal, together with the fortress of Rendsburg), and the admission of Holstein, with Schleswig, into the *Zollverein*. Lauenburg became Prussian, a compensation of 2½ million Danish dollars being paid to Austria.

In this form, omitting further details, the Convention of Gastein was concluded by Bismarck and Blome on August 14th, 1865, and ratified by the two sovereigns at Salzburg on the 20th. By way of leaving no doubt as to their genuine feelings of amity, General Edwin von Manteuffel, Chief of the Military Cabinet and *persona gratissima* at the Austrian Court, was appointed Governor of Schleswig[1], and General von Gablenz of Holstein, while Halbhuber was superseded as civil commissioner. The King paid a visit to the Empress Elisabeth at Ischl; and Bismarck, who had feared to the last that, if the secret of the terms were not kept, the negotiation and with it the acquisition

[1] See Roon's *Denkwürdigkeiten*, vol. II, pp. 321–2. The appointment was a relief to Roon as War Minister, but Manteuffel deeply felt his removal from the personal *entourage* of the King, of whom he was one of the most highminded and independent counsellors.

of the control of Kiel would break down[1], was made a count. To him, the Convention was an expedient transaction, rather than a victorious achievement of Prussian policy, in which light it was regarded in the duchies, and throughout Germany. The large majority of the Holsteiners, still loyal to Augustenburg, declared that they would not be sold like the Lauenburgers. The Vienna journals concluded, as a matter of course, that their Government had been outwitted by Bismarck. At Frankfort, where some radical resolutions, passed at a general meeting of German parliamentary deputies on October 1st (from which, however, several leading members of the *Fortschritt* had absented themselves), had caused the two Great Powers to protest strongly to the Senate against the recurrence of such proceedings, the *Nationalverein*, under Bennigsen's presidency, on the 28th, declared in favour of the February concessions to Prussia, but against the Gastein Convention. A month before this, Treitschke had launched his choicest invective against the fatuous folly of the *Nationalverein* and the Augustenburgers; and now Bismarck put forth a semi-official statement that the aims of the *Nationalverein* had never been those of the King's Government, and that, if Prussia were to accept the kind of hegemony proffered to her by that association, she would cease to be Prussia[2].

Among the secondary states there was great indignation; and Beust could not reconcile himself to the rejection *sub silentio* of the plan, which he had suggested at Vienna, of enquiring whether the Confederation wished Austria to remain in Schleswig-Holstein or not, and thus identifying their interests. Among foreign Powers, the reception accorded to the Convention varied. Lord Russell described

[1] *Gedanken und Erinnerungen*, vol. II, pp. 15 ff.

[2] See Oncken, *R. von Bennigsen*, vol. I, pp. 680–4. Treitschke's essay 'Die Parteien und die Herzogthümer' is printed in *Zehn Jahre Deutscher Kämpfe*, pp. 33–59.

it as 'infamous'; but epithets break no bones. La Marmora thought it as unreal as 'its very worthy sister,' the September Convention concerning Rome, but an excellent opportunity for entering into secret negotiations with the Austrian Government about the cession of Venetia[1]. To the French Government, whose military *attaché* at Berlin (Comte de Clermont-Tonnerre) bluntly opined that Prussia had wasted time at Gastein, the Convention had been communicated through Metternich even before its ratification, being represented as a definitive settlement in which Prussia had contented herself with the half instead of the whole[2]. The Emperor Napoleon reserved his judgment, and made no change in his friendly bearing towards Prussia; but he could neither ignore nor conceal the drift of public opinion in France. His proposal of a European Congress in 1863 had been rejected; the Danish War of the following year had been undertaken against his wish; now, the two duchies, to preserve which 'undivided' the war had been waged, had been split up between the victors, and foreign Powers, France in particular, had been clearly apprised that Austria and Prussia could manage their affairs for themselves. Thus, he felt bound to authorise Drouyn de Lhuys to issue a diplomatic circular (August 21st) expressing the imperial disapproval of the Convention, and attacking the German Powers for their arbitrary action in the Schleswig-Holstein question; and Lord Russell speedily followed suit with a dispatch of similar purport. At Berlin there was great disappointment, more especially as Napoleon had, only a day or two earlier, told von der Goltz that, had there been war between Austria and Prussia, he would have observed a benevolent neutrality towards the latter, whom he now advised to pursue a Liberal policy which would remove all

[1] La Marmora, p. 60.

[2] As to the general drift of French diplomatic reports on the subject see *Les Origines Diplomatiques de la Guerre de* 1870–1, vol. VII.

necessity for war. But the situation assumed a brighter aspect when the Emperor, on proceeding to Biarritz with the Empress on September 7th, invited the Prussian ambassador to accompany the court to its holiday retreat, and when, a fortnight later, a telegram[1] arrived at Berlin from the French Foreign Minister, indicating his satisfaction at the provisional character of the Convention, and his expectation of a definitive settlement entirely acceptable to France.

It was in these circumstances that Bismarck obtained the assent of his sovereign to his plan of a visit on his part to Biarritz, on the understanding that, for the present, no obligations towards France should be entered into there. He was neither now nor at other times on the most cordial of terms with von der Goltz (who, for his part, was conspicuously self-reliant), though unable to ignore his ability; and it was natural that he should on this occasion desire to act for himself. On his way through Paris, he saw Drouyn de Lhuys, and also Rouher, who, while the Foreign Minister inclined to Austria, favoured Prussia and was, like Prince Napoleon, a decided partisan of Italy. On October 3rd, he arrived at Biarritz, where, on the following day, he was received by the Emperor Napoleon, who remained there till the 12th, Bismarck continuing his stay till the end of the month.

In 1864 he had met with a cold reception at Biarritz; now, there seems every indication that he was made welcome by the Emperor, who was, from about this time onward, passing into the condition of irresoluteness and infirmity of will, largely due to physical suffering and debility, which were to become more and more grievous during the remainder of his days[2]. He was now confronted by a statesmanship free from all doubts as to either its purposes or its needs. Before leaving Berlin, Bismarck had, with his usual frankness, expounded the situation to the French *chargé d'affaires*

[1] Not a dispatch, as stated by Sybel. See Ollivier, vol. VII, pp. 462–3.

[2] *Ib.*, pp. 490–2.

Lefebvre de Behaine, pointing out precisely what Prussia required in Schleswig, what demands Italy should, in his opinion, make upon Austria, and what equivalent for Venetia Austria should secure upon the Danube. Prussia could not achieve what she desired in northern Germany—to which, it should be observed, he restricted his statement of her aspirations—without the countenance of France, while Austria might settle as she chose with the 'Calabria' of the German south. All this would be to the advantage of France, who, instead of a compact Confederation, would have two leagues on her borders, and who was merely asked to approve an alliance between Prussia and Italy. These were the objects to which Bismarck was desirous of obtaining the assent—not necessarily explicit—of the Emperor Napoleon at Biarritz. At the same time, he wished to find out—again, not necessarily to ask—whether the Emperor had in mind any contingent 'compensations' for France and, if so, of what they consisted. Whether, in the Biarritz interviews which followed, the Emperor's astute interlocutor actually made mention of Belgium, Luxemburg or French-speaking Switzerland, and whether he suggested an occupation of the Bavarian Palatinate, or a cession of the Rhine province or of part of it, is not likely to be ever known; what may be taken as certain is that Bismarck neither promised nor offered to help bring about any of these results, and the last of them least of all. And, indeed, it is, at all events, open to question, whether Napoleon had any such compensations in mind, and whether it was not enough for him to see the fulfilment of his heart's wish—the cession of Venetia—at last near at hand. In any case, it was in accordance with his principles and practice that he should be found unwilling to put a stop upon Prussia's policy of expansion in Germany, and have no objection to Austria's relinquishing Holstein, for a sum of money, to begin with. In the event of a conflict between

the two German Powers there was absolutely no fear of any interference by France, on behalf of Austria, whatever part she might play later; and the Prusso-Italian alliance might now be concluded.

Such seems to have been the net outcome of the Biarritz interviews and of a supplementary audience granted to Bismarck on his way home by the Emperor Napoleon at St Cloud early in November; and, while Bismarck may not have penetrated into the inmost thoughts of the Emperor, and not even a verbal understanding may have taken place between them, it seems clear that the Prussian Minister was on the whole encouraged by the results, positive and negative, of his visit of enquiry[1].

Meanwhile, the course of events had continued to point to a renewal of the crisis which had been temporarily averted by the Convention of Gastein. The administration of the duchies had not been carried on without friction—between Manteuffel's resolute rigour and Gablenz's persistent morigeration to Augustenburg sympathies, which in Schleswig even led to a fruitless intrigue with the Danes in the north of the duchy, and in Holstein manifested themselves with almost as much openness as in the pre-Gastein days. So matters went on to the turn of the year. At the Frankfort Diet, too, the outbreak of the conflict was yet a little longer delayed. Austria and Prussia held together in resisting the attempt of Bavaria, Saxony and Hesse-Darmstadt to bring at last to the vote a motion made by them, more than three months earlier, in favour of the summons of the Schleswig-Holstein Estates and the admission of Schleswig into the Germanic Confederation; and they were successful (November 18th) in consigning the motion to the form of burial called reference to a committee.

[1] With Sybel, vol. IV, bk. XIV, ch. IV (Bismarck's own account) should be compared G. Rothan, *La Politique Française en* 1866, I (1884), and E. Ollivier, vol. VII, ch. XIII.

The dissenting secondary states declared their intervention in the Schleswig-Holstein question at an end; but this vote also put a full stop to the cooperation of the two Great Powers at the Diet. Meanwhile, the Prussian proposal of the transfer of Schleswig to Prussia, in return for a money-payment to Austria (to which Napoleon had taken no exception when Bismarck had mentioned it to him at Biarritz), was laid before the Emperor Francis Joseph.

The Italian Prime-minister, as was seen above, had thought that advantage should be taken of the conclusion of the Gastein Convention, as displaying the conciliatory intentions of Austria, to open the question of a peaceable cession of Venetia; and, about the time of the Biarritz conversations, he sent the Modenese Count Malaguzzi to Vienna, with secret instructions to offer 1000 million *lire* (£40,000,000) as purchase-money, in addition to certain further 'eventual' concessions. La Marmora states that very few Italian generals had any belief in the solidity of the Prussian army[1]; but a Ministerial crisis was at hand in Italy, and he was more interested in the state of internal politics than in foreign alliances, and felt uncertain whether Napoleon would like Italy to acquire Venice before the French were out of Rome.

When the Italian proposal for the purchase of Venice was laid before the Emperor Francis Joseph, together with the Prussian suggestion of the purchase of Schleswig, he decisively negatived both. To follow up the bargain as to Austria's rights in Lauenburg by more extensive transactions of the same sort seemed more than the honour of the empire could bear. But, while the refusal of Prussia's offer implied a present determination not to yield in a contest which was rapidly becoming one for ascendancy in German politics at large, the rejection of the Italian proposal seems to have been neither meant nor understood as more

[1] La Marmora, *Un po' più di luce*, p. 65.

than the satisfaction of *amour-propre*. Nevertheless, it could not fail to exercise its effect, especially when, in December 1865, all the *Zollverein* Governments, with the exception of Hanover and Nassau, were found ready, on the demand of Prussia and Bavaria, to accept the commercial treaty agreed upon with Italy—an acceptance implying their recognition of the Italian kingdom[1].

Thus, when the new year—the year which was to settle finally the Austro-Prussian conflict and with it the future of Germany—began, a decision was perceived to be no longer far off. In the duchies, Manteuffel's patience, which could not be described as infinite, was so severely tried that he declared the expulsion of the 'Hereditary Prince' (whose consort had recently made a quasi-royal progress from Altona to Kiel) to be the sole test which could be applied to Austria's intentions; and, if Prussia refused to insist on this, or, more broadly put, if she yielded in Holstein, she must yield to her rival all along the line.

But, in the mind which guided the policy of Prussia, there was no thought of yielding. On January 20th, 1866, Bismarck apprised Mensdorff that Prussia had not been prepared for such a violation by Austria of the rights common in the duchies to both the Powers as was implied by the continued presence and conduct of the Augustenburg prince in Holstein; but he was informed in reply that the prince had always borne himself as a private person, and that, in any case, Prussian control over the Austrian administration in Holstein was inadmissible. A few days later (January 23rd), a large public meeting was held at Altona in support of the convocation of the Estates; and, though, in accordance with a promise made in return for the revocation of the prohibition of the meeting by Gablenz, no resolutions were proposed, cheers were called for and given in honour of 'our beloved lawful

[1] Cf. *Memoirs of Sir R. Morier*, vol. II, p. 15.

sovereign Duke Frederick.' An angry exchange of notes followed, in which Bismarck dwelt on Austria's encouragement of the revolutionary tendencies which the Gastein Convention was to have served to repress; and Mensdorff, while harking back to the resolution proposed at the London Conference on May 28th, 1864, in favour of Augustenburg, reiterated the refusal of his sovereign to allow himself to be called to account for any administrative act in Holstein. To this reply, dated February 7th, Bismarck contented himself with retorting, in conversation with Karolyi, that the relations between Austria and Prussia had been taken back to the point at which they stood before the Danish War—in other words, that the alliance between the two Powers was at an end. The question of an open rupture was now one of time only[1].

Before, however, formal expression could be given to the change which had definitively taken place, it was necessary that other alliances should be found, or at least other combinations attempted. From the German secondary states there was little to hope, though von der Pfordten gave it to be understood that, unless Austria really designed to uphold the Augustenburg succession, he would prefer the annexation of the duchies by Prussia to any third solution; while, as to the future of Germany at large, he still hoped for a tripartite division which would imply the ascendancy of Prussia in the north. As to France, the Emperor Napoleon's tone in his conversations with von der Goltz was still friendly as to the annexation of the duchies by Prussia and as to her ulterior aims; but Benedetti at Berlin was at a loss how to reply to the quasi-confidences with which he was favoured by Bismarck, and beyond a benevolent neutrality there was nothing to be expected in this quarter. Italy,

[1] As to this stage of the quarrel, and the conviction on both sides that the bridge between them was practically broken off, see Lettow-Vorbeck, vol. I, p. 17.

on the other hand, though Austria had only recently declined the idea of a voluntary cession of Venetia, had of late been the recipient of divers unexpected favours from Vienna, and, more especially as the Emperor Napoleon's wishes on the subject were still secret, she was hesitating as to her attitude towards an Austro-Prussian conflict. If she was to be brought to a decision, there was not much time to be lost.

The issue between the two German Great Powers was considered at a great Ministerial Council held at Berlin on February 28th. The King, in opening the proceedings, adverted to Austria's practice of 'keeping down Prussia,' and said that the possession of the duchies was the national wish of Prussia, the future action of whose Government, though not intended to provoke the outbreak of war with Austria, must not shrink from such a consequence. Bismarck thought war with Austria inevitable sooner or later, and held it more prudent to enter upon the conflict in circumstances favourable to Prussia, than to give Austria the advantage of the choice of time. He was vigorously supported by Edwin von Manteuffel and others. Goltz, who had been specially summoned from Paris, reported favourably as to the attitude of the Emperor Napoleon. Moltke regarded an active participation in the war by Italy as an indispensable condition of certain success. The Finance Minister, Bodelschwingh, however, still hoped for a compromise with Austria; and the Crown-prince, expressing sentiments which were still those of German Liberalism, adhered to his opposition to a fratricidal war sure to provoke foreign intervention. The King's final pronouncement was that, though his wishes were in favour of peace, his mind was made up, if it must be so, for war in what he believed to be a just cause. Accordingly, no change was made in the policy which the Prussian Government had definitively pursued since the Council of May 29th of the previous year.

Prussia continued to insist on either the whole of the February demands or annexation, and Austria was left to resort to arms in order to withstand either issue. Since there could be no doubt as to Austria's response, it is not too much to say that this was the date at which Bismarck's German policy was formally constituted the Prussian Government policy, and that the Schleswig-Holstein business now became a mere episode of the German question at large[1].

In accordance with the course of the discussion at this memorable council, steps—which had already been duly prepared—were now at once taken to ascertain the actual prospects of French acquiescence and of Italian cooperation. An autograph letter of enquiry from the King to the Emperor was, after a long conversation with von der Goltz, answered by Napoleon, who, after offering assurances of friendship, observed that he could not for the present make any statement as to French compensations, but hoped that there would be no ultimate difficulty on this head—in other words, that he would not interfere in the question of the duchies, and reserved his treatment of the situation, should the action of Prussia result in her further aggrandisement. But, at the same time, von der Goltz sent word that the Emperor Napoleon had advised King Victor Emmanuel to lose no time in concluding an offensive and defensive alliance with Prussia; and, though not without misgivings on both sides, the relations between Prussia and Italy were drawn closer. This was probably largely due to the efforts of Usedom, the Prussian envoy at Florence, though he earned scant praise from Bismarck. Already, on January 28th, the Order of the Black Eagle had been

[1] Cf. the admirable summary of the evolution of Bismarck's German policy up to the foundation of the North-German Confederation by W. Busch in *Historische Zeitschrift*, vol. CIII (1909). For Moltke's protocol of this Council, see Lettow-Vorbeck, vol. III, p. 473.

sent to King Victor Emmanuel; now, before the commercial treaty on foot between Italy and the *Zollverein* was concluded and ratified (March 3rd–12th), the Italian Government was invited to send a military officer of rank in confidence to Berlin, while a Prussian General (Moltke, to wit) was to take part at Florence in discussing future operations. General Govone, distinguished both as a politician and as an officer, was accordingly sent, with instructions to announce the readiness of his Government to sign an offensive and defensive treaty, if proposed to it by Prussia. If not, he was to enter into no engagements, inasmuch as there could be no doubt that Austria would sooner or later propose to Italy the cession of Venetia. Indeed, as La Marmora frankly confesses, he took care to point out to his agent that the very fact of his mission to Berlin might render the Austrian Government willing to adopt a line of action favourable to Italy; in which case, without her fault, the negotiations begun at Berlin would remain purposeless[1]. Nor did he speak without book; for at this very time the overthrow of Prince Couza of Roumania at Bucharest (February 24th) had suggested to the fertile brain of the Italian ambassador at Paris, Cavaliere Nigra, the offer of the Danubian Principalities as a compensation to Austria for the cession of Venetia. La Marmora was pleased with the notion, and the Emperor Napoleon approved it, although he urged the Italian Government in any case to hold fast by the Prussian alliance. While, therefore, suspicion was felt at Florence that Prussia, unless placed under clear obligations, might leave Italy in the lurch after she had secured Schleswig-Holstein, at Berlin it was feared, with at least equally good reason, that Italy, if she could obtain Venetia without drawing the sword, would break off the negotiations with which General Govone had been charged, and sit loosely to the

[1] La Marmora, p. 77.

negotiations into which she was entering with Prussia, if she did not break them off altogether. Moltke's departure for Florence was accordingly postponed.

The Roumanian scheme, however, being vetoed by the Tsar, came to nothing, and the Italo-Prussian negotiations continued, though at first very cautiously—it might almost be said tentatively. But at Vienna there was much alarm, and the air was already full of electricity. An enlargement of the plan of the annual review of the Berlin *Landwehr* led to rumours of Prussian mobilisation; and, after certain preliminary orders had been given, a Council of Marshals (consisting of a number of generals and certain Ministers of State) was held at Vienna, at which, however, Mensdorff deprecated premature action. But fresh alarm was excited by a downright warning given by Bismarck (hardly altogether in banter) to the wife of the Saxon envoy at Berlin, to whom he foretold the immediate outbreak of hostilities in Bohemia[1]. Beust, in communicating this intelligence to Mensdorff, declared that the hour had come for Austria to arm, unless she was prepared to forfeit the attachment of the secondary states for ever. The Council of Marshals now resolved to reinforce the troops in the provinces adjoining Prussia—Bohemia, Moravia and Galicia. 'The prologue to the war,' as it has been said, had been found; for the responsibility of the first step could now be thrown on Austria. Austrian enquiry about Prussia's intentions as to the Convention of Gastein and the peace of the Confederation missed fire, and the real question at issue pressed itself to the front. A British offer of mediation, made at Berlin on March 18th, was evaded by Bismarck's suggestion that it had, perhaps, better have been made to Austria; and a desire for peace expressed by the Tsar in his birthday congratulations to King William (22nd) fell flat. On the 24th, Bismarck, in a circular to the German

[1] Rothan, p. 114.

Governments, referred to the Austrian movements of troops, which must lead to Prussian counter-movements, and at the same time first announced his plans of Federal reform. The Prussian military measures were ordered by a Ministerial Council held three days later, some 11,000 further troops being called out to reinforce the garrisons of the Silesian and Elbe fortresses.

At last, La Marmora, who had throughout insisted on an offensive and defensive alliance with equal rights, could see how far Prussia was in earnest; and the objection against leaving her, notwithstanding, to choose the time for the outbreak of the war, was now met by the proposal of Count Barral (the Italian envoy at Berlin) to restrict the binding force of the proposed treaty to two, or (as he amended his suggestion in deference to Bismarck) to three months. Thus, on April 8th, the momentous treaty was concluded that secured to Prussia the aid of Italy, without which Moltke had held the waging of war with Austria questionable, while it made open hostility to Prussia virtually impossible for Italy's protector. The treaty purported to be one of 'offensive and defensive alliance'—words which Barral had succeeded at the last moment in substituting for 'unity and friendship'; it was to hold good for three months, unless within that period Prussia had declared war against Austria; and its essential clause was that, after Prussia had done this, Italy was, so soon as she was apprised of the fact, to follow suit. No peace or armistice was to be concluded without mutual consent; but this consent was not to be withheld, so soon as Austria should have agreed to cede to Italy the Lombardo-Venetian kingdom and to Prussia neighbouring territories equivalent to that kingdom in population[1]. Thus, Bismarck had secured to Prussia what was of supreme importance to her, the right of

[1] For the text of the treaty, see Ollivier, vol. VIII, pp. 60–1, and Sybel, vol. IV, pp. 229–30.

deciding for herself the time for beginning the war, except in the highly improbable event of an Austrian attack upon Italy, and had provided against the intervention, at the end of the war, of Italy's imperial protector.

Before the conclusion of the treaty with Italy, which remained secret, the King of Prussia had given his consent to the initial step towards mobilisation; but it had been adjourned over Easter. Meanwhile, Bismarck had lost no time with regard to the Federal reform proposals announced by him in his circular of March 24th, of which the design was, in a word to unite against Austria all non-Austrian Germany. While he had taken care to inform the Emperor Napoleon of the essential purport of his proposals—the division of the military command between Prussia and Bavaria, and the implied exclusion of Austria from the Confederation—he had communicated to the Bavarian Government, on whose chief, von der Pfordten, he had not ceased to count, the scheme of a national parliament which was to be the crown of his proposals. Von der Pfordten was much pleased with the parliamentary scheme, direct elections and all, and had nothing to say against Bismarck's very questionable argument as to the monarchical spirit of the masses. But with regard to the military command he and his sovereign were, notwithstanding the representations of Hohenlohe[1], not to be induced to go beyond the old

[1] *Denkwürdigkeiten*, vol. I, p. 154. He begged King Lewis to reflect that now was the time for an understanding with Prussia, which demanded only the supremacy in northern Germany. Hohenlohe had, after a brief interval of misgiving, returned to the political programme (adhesion to Prussia) which he had advocated so far back as November 1849, and by reason of which he had for seventeen years been excluded from public service in Bavaria. But the King shrank from politics; parties were distracted and mutually distrustful; and von der Pfordten, though he combined high purpose with acuteness of insight, lacked both the clearness of purpose and the resolution which would have made him master of the

Trias idea in a new form; nor would they, in reply to Bismarck's statement that a preliminary understanding with Austria was impossible, consent to the exclusion of Austria from the Confederation. On March 31st, von der Pfordten proposed to both the Great Powers to desist from further thought of hostile operations and to enter into negotiations for the maintenance of the Federal peace. Though Bismarck professed himself willing to accept this offer, he was at the same time made aware of the beginning of armaments in Bavaria itself, and proceeded with his Federal reform policy. On April 9th—the day after the conclusion of the alliance with Italy—Savigny proposed the summoning of a national parliament by direct election, before which would be laid the scheme of Federal reform to be agreed upon between the several Governments.

The motion could not have been unforeseen; but the effect created by it was general amazement. Even now the feeling of mistrust of Bismarck prevailed in Liberal quarters over any sense of satisfaction. At a meeting of the *Nationalverein* at Berlin (April 11th), Schulze-Delitzsch condemned Bismarck's 'ridiculous' move in the German question as 'empty juggling.' In Württemberg and at Munich the *Fortschritt* party, and at Hanover the *Nationalverein*, declined to lift a hand in favour of Bismarck's proposed Parliament; only in Baden the Second Chamber was in its favour, though the Minister von Edelsheim was against it. Great Britain and Russia united in looking askance upon the proposal for universal suffrage; and the Emperor Napoleon's expressed sympathy with that hallowed expedient was shared by very few French politicians. Bismarck continued on his course unmoved.

Von der Pfordten still temporised; and it was owing

situation. See K. A. von Müller, *Bayern im J.* 1866 (1909). For a general, by no means unkindly, view of von der Pfordten's conduct, see Beust, *Memoirs* (Engl. tr.), vol. I, pp. 292–3.

to him that, on April 21st, the Prussian motion at the Diet, instead of being rejected, was referred to a special committee. Austria assented, on condition that Prussia's proposals of Federal reform were made known before the matter proceeded further. Although the Austrian armaments had rendered the continuance of peace extremely doubtful, the attitude of von der Pfordten, who, on April 22nd conferred at Augsburg with the other leading Ministers of the secondary states, remained friendly enough to induce the Prussian Government, in the end, to communicate to a committee appointed by the Diet the following confidential proposals, as settled at a conference in Berlin in which Savigny had been summoned to take part. A National Assembly was to be created whose resolutions would take the place of the unanimity in the Diet previously required for organic changes and certain other matters of high importance; and the members of this parliament were to be chosen by direct election, one for every 100,000 souls. The competence of the new Federal authority—a reinforced Diet—thus instituted was to extend to all the matters entrusted to the Diet by the Vienna Final Act, including the revision of the military constitution. Nothing could be more moderate, or in a sense more conservative than the sum-total of these proposals; but care had been taken to let more than one Government know that, if they were rejected, Prussia would present a far more incisive scheme of reform. The Frankfort Committee, presided over by Schrenck (May 11th), having permitted Savigny to explain his Government's scheme confidentially, resolved, against the votes of Austria and Darmstadt, before calling upon Prussia for a formal statement, to refer to the Governments for further instructions. But, before these instructions arrived and the first formal statement was made by Prussia to the Diet (May 11th), the crisis had come nearer.

According to the reckoning of the Austrian War Office itself—and events showed that it was not greatly mistaken—the mobilisation of the army and its transport to the frontier which required seven weeks in Austria, required only twenty-five days in Prussia; and, before Austrian action at this time is condemned as rash, this fact should be remembered together with the *impetus* which mobilisation rarely fails to communicate to the tone and temper of a Government and a nation, and which in the present instance neither Russian good advice nor Bavarian suggestions of a better way were likely to restrain. After a previous exchange of notes, an Austrian dispatch, of April 18th, offered to recall, on the 25th, the troops which had been sent forward to the frontier in March, if Prussia would promise to reduce to a peace-footing by the same date the regiments increased by her at the end of the same month. In the face of Europe, it seemed impossible to return an unfavourable reply; but, at this very moment, the news of Italian armaments—the product, as La Marmora confesses, of fears even more than of hopes—reached Vienna. The reports were exaggerated and in part untrue; but, before the explanations arrived, it had been formally resolved, on April 21st, to mobilise the army of the South for the protection of the whole of the Italian frontier, the Littoral and Dalmatia. The general plan of action had thus been completed; and the supreme command of the southern army was conferred upon Archduke Albrecht, and that of the northern upon *Feldzeugmeister* Benedek. Although as yet there were no movements of Prussian troops, the Austrian army of the North was mobilised by successive instalments, the first executive order being given on April 27th. With infinite trouble, the Minister of Finance floated a loan of 60 million florins, soon followed by the proclamation of a compulsory circulation of notes for 115 million. But public feeling was thoroughly in support of

the rapid action of the Government; and, to avoid dissension on the further side of the Leitha, it was settled, with Deák's approval, to adjourn the Hungarian diet during the course of the war.

And, now that Austria was on the point of throwing down the gage, her statesmen, aware of what had been done and of what must follow, perceived that no time was to be lost if the struggle for which they were declaring themselves ready was to be more than a mere war of defence. The original cause of the difference with Prussia—Schleswig-Holstein—had now become a mere encumbrance of a conflict for far wider and greater ends. On April 26th the Prussian Government was informed that, unless it were content with certain lesser concessions in the duchies, the whole question there must be decided by the Confederation and the Schleswig-Holstein Estates—in other words, that the Gastein Convention was at an end. Bismarck left this dispatch for the present unanswered. On the same date, the Austrian Government repeated the offer as to withdrawal of troops made on April 18th, if Prussia would disarm notwithstanding the mobilisation of Austria's southern army. Bismarck replied that a complete return to a peace-footing by Austria was the indispensable condition of a Prussian disarmament. On the same day, in reply to an enquiry from the Italian Government, Bismarck stated his intention to inform the Austrian Government that, unless it disarmed in Venetia and elsewhere, it was impossible for Prussia to disarm on her side. She could not, he said, remain indifferent to an attack upon Italy —which kingdom was necessary for the preservation of the balance of Europe. On April 26th, La Marmora ordered the mobilisation of the entire Italian army.

The interval, so familiar in its recurrence to the student of modern wars, of futile proposals for disarmament passing backwards and forwards on the eve of the outbreak, was

coming gradually to an end. Orders were issued for the mobilisation of the Austrian army of the North from April 27th to May 5th. In reply, the several Prussian army corps were mobilised in succession—the final order (to the Ist and IInd) being given on May 8th, so that, even now, the Prussian army would be ready to take the field sooner than the Austrian—by the beginning of June.

Meanwhile, the secondary and lesser states, whose own will could not in all instances determine their action, were seeking to meet the tide in German affairs, or were fairly overtaken by it. In Hesse-Cassel, the Austrian plan of uniting the Electoral troops with the Austrian brigade speedily expected back from Holstein had been anticipated by the mobilisation of the Prussian (Rhenish) army corps actually on the Hessian frontier. With Hanover there had been protracted negotiations. The anti-Prussian feeling which animated King George V and the counsellors in whom he put his trust, and which had been heightened by such incidents as the Prussian purchase from Oldenburg of the Jahde-bay (1853), and the frustration at the Federal Diet of the Hanoverian scheme for the defence of the North Sea coast (1861), had been to some extent counteracted by the Liberal Opposition of which Bennigsen had become the acknowledged leader; moreover, in December 1862 a Liberal Ministry—though not one of very pronounced views—which included the Catholic Windthorst, Platen still retaining Foreign Affairs—had taken office. At the end of 1865, however, the Liberal elements in this Ministry had been again excluded; and, outside the actual Ministry, the anti-constitutional influence of *Staatsrat* Zimmermann had become stronger than ever, while the press was manipulated by the redoubtable Meding. Still, there is no reason for supposing that, had moderate counsels prevailed at Hanover, annexation to Prussia would have been the fate

of the kingdom, more especially as the Hanoverian Government had not opposed Prussian policy as to the Schleswig-Holstein succession. But Count Platen's visit to Berlin in January 1866 had shown that the Hanoverian Government would not bind itself even to neutrality; and, by the middle of May, King George V had gone so far as to promise the Emperor Francis Joseph that, in case of war, the Hanoverian troops should unite with the Austrian Holstein brigade in the entrenched camp at Stade. Yet, at the council to which he made this announcement, the general feeling was for neutrality; and it was at this very time that Bennigsen, who, while anxious to preserve the autonomy of Hanover, was exerting his influence in favour of neutrality in the coming war, had an interview with Bismarck. For a moment, it seemed as if the voice of reason would prevail. On the 20th Prussia formally proposed to the King of Hanover, whose action in advancing the date of the autumn manœuvres of his army by several months had given umbrage at Berlin, a treaty guaranteeing his sovereignty in the event of his observing neutrality—which must be unarmed—in the expected war. But, on the same day, Prince Solms-Braunfels, the King's step-brother, appeared at Hanover, and the Austrian influence bore down all opposition; and on the 23rd the Council of Ministers, held under the presidency of the King, resolved to respond to any lawful Federal demands—i.e. to mobilise, if called upon by the Diet. On June 6th, Bennigsen made his last important speech in his native land, but it was too late; and on the 12th the resolution was taken to join in the Federal vote for general mobilisation[1].

[1] See as to these events F. von der Wengen, *Gesch. der Kriegsereignisse*, etc., pp. 53 ff.; and cf. Oncken, *R. Bennigsen*, vol. 1, pp. 715 ff. On June 14th, the day of the vote, Bennigsen received from Bismarck (who did not yet quite know his man) an invitation to preside over the

Neither Bavaria, where von der Pfordten's hesitation was coming to an end after the mobilisation of the Prussian Rhenish army corps, although hardly any preparations had been made for military resistance, nor Saxony, where the fortifications of the Königstein had been put in order by the middle of March, any longer veiled its intentions. On May 14th, one more conference of Ministers of the secondary states was held at Bamberg, where a proposal of neutrality, unwillingly made by the Baden Minister von Edelsheim in deference to the wishes of his sovereign, met with no support; though the Ministers of the Thuringian Courts abstained from taking part in the general vote in favour of mobilisation of the armies of all the Governments represented. This course was preferred to that favoured by Austria—the mobilisation by the Confederation of all the Federal troops except those of the two Great Powers; and, in testimony of the end in view, a general motion for disarmament was to be brought forward at the Diet. Meanwhile, Württemberg mobilised, as well as Hesse-Darmstadt and Nassau. All Germany was once more a camp of arms; but, though the issues of the coming struggle were becoming clear to far-sighted minds—even to those whose political principles had not ceased to keep them opposed to Bismarck's system of government—the war had only a very slowly growing number of supporters either in Prussia or in the rest of northern Germany. Bismarck's unpopularity was still at its height, and was only momentarily dissipated by the attempt made upon his life in the street *Unter den Linden* on May 7th, by a youthful fanatic (Karl Blind), which he met with imperturbable courage. Two days after this incident, the Prussian Chamber was dissolved, after, if one may so say, amusing itself by declaring

Prussian administration to be established in Hanover, after it had been occupied by Prussian troops. The invitation was at once distinctly refused.

the personal union between Prussia and Lauenburg irreconcileable with the constitution, and then engaging in a lengthy contention as to parliamentary freedom of speech; it had maintained an attitude of uncompromising hostility to the Ministry, which had already given an indication of the financial policy it was likely to pursue in the case of war. But, as even the most valiant of the supporters of the general policy of the Prussian Government, Heinrich von Treitschke, confessed[1], to carry on war by means of a loan demanded from parliament without recognition of its budget-right, would be indefensible; and certain obnoxious members of the Ministry ought to be sacrificed. But among these he could not bring himself to include either Bismarck or Roon. As to the former, the aversion or fear which he inspired in some members of the royal family was hardly less strong than that which impelled the Chamber against him. The sympathy with southern Germany which filled the heart of the good Queen Dowager, and the reactionary prejudices of the King's brother, Prince Charles, were alike arrayed against the Minister; and more formidable was the steady opposition of the Liberal traditions cherished by Queen Augusta and bravely upheld by her son the Crown-prince, whose British-born consort was heart and soul at one with him in this matter as in all others.

Resolute as was the great Minister's adherence to the line of action he had marked out for himself, he was aware of the danger which continued to threaten it from intervention on the part of the Emperor Napoleon, with whom he had throughout striven to maintain an understanding. But Napoleon, too, had a difficult course to shape between the policy which he desired and that which French public opinion from time to time inclined to force upon him.

[1] See his remarkable essay 'Der Krieg und die Bundesreform,' dated May 25th, in *Zehn Jahre Deutscher Kämpfe*

Quite early in May, he had, in strictest confidence, informed von der Goltz that Austria had conveyed a hint to him of proposals which she was about to make to him and which it would not be in Prussia's interest for him to accept; were there any alternative proposals for which he might look from Prussia? Almost at the same time, Bismarck received a formal enquiry through Benedetti, calculated to prevent at the last moment the outbreak of war. The French Government had, in March, held aloof from the tentative suggestion offered at Berlin by Great Britain; Benedetti now asked whether Prussia would consent to a congress. Bismarck's answer to this question was courteous, but guarded; as to von der Goltz's report, it seemed enough to reply that, if offers equivalent to the Austrian were desired from Prussia, she must be made acquainted with the Austrian offer. But, on May 3rd, the situation developed in another quarter. On that day Thiers delivered in the Legislative Body the famous speech denouncing the foreign policy of the Emperor's Government and demanding that its weight should be exerted against the Prusso-Italian alliance (as a matter of fact, already concluded) and the war which it implied. The Emperor's answer was the oracular delivery at Auxerre (May 6th), in which he avowed his detestation of the Treaties of 1815 and thereby increased immensely the apprehensions of war which filled Europe, and Germany in particular. But, on the day before this speech, the Emperor had informed Nigra of Austria's proposal—which he must assuredly have been considering with deliberation—that she would cede Venetia to him, so soon as she was herself in possession of Silesia. He was to transfer it to Italy unconditionally, except that she was to pay a sum of money, to be spent by Austria in fortifying her new frontier. In return, France and Italy would engage to remain neutral in the war between Austria and Prussia. Napoleon, who had replied that, in any case, the cession of Venetia must

precede the occupation of Silesia, now enquired whether it would be possible for Italy to free herself from her engagements. The merits of the double 'case of conscience' which arose out of this offer cannot be discussed here[1]. La Marmora, though in general prone to defer to France and anything but warmly disposed towards Prussia, rightly interpreted Italian feeling in refusing the proposed indirect cession, as both unworthy of Italy and incompatible with her treaty with Prussia, and contented himself with King William's assurance that Prussia, though not bound by treaty to such action, would, in case of an Austrian attack upon Italy, at once take part in the war. As for the French Emperor, to whom Italy was very dear, it does him honour that he should have acquiesced in her decision, and, instead of turning against her at the last, should have directed his thoughts, though too late, to the preservation of peace and the congress (first suggested to him by Lord Cowley).

Yet it was now that, before either the congress proposals had assumed more definite shape or the gates of the temple of Janus had been closed, a singular attempt, almost of the nature of a private enterprise, was made to prevent such a conclusion. Freiherr Anton von Gablenz, whose name calls for more general remembrance than seems to have been accorded it[2], was brother to the distinguished Austrian general, the charm of whose manner, due to great amiability of disposition, he may be presumed to have shared. The family was of Saxon origin; but Anton was a Prussian landed proprietor and had sat in the Prussian Chamber. In April he found an opportunity of laying before Mensdorff his project of an arrangement between Austria and Prussia

[1] La Marmora deals with the Italian side of the question at great length; as to the French, see Ollivier, vol. VIII, ch. VIII ('Un Cas de Conscience').

[2] I cannot find it in *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie*.

which should put an end to their existing differences. Schleswig-Holstein, *ungedeelt*, was to become an independent state under a Prussian prince. As to the military constitution of the Confederation, it was to be reformed in the sense that, in both peace and war, Austria should have the supreme command over all the southern, and Prussia over all the northern, German contingents. Prussia should acquire Kiel harbour, paying a sum of 5 million dollars (*c.* £700,000) to Austria, who should also receive 20 million (*c.* £3,300,000) from the duchies, for her expenditure in the recent war. Rendsburg was to be a Federal fortress with a Prussian garrison; on the other hand, Austria was to have exclusive garrison rights in Rastatt, and the command of the Hohenzollern contingent. On this basis, the two Governments were to enter upon a general scheme of Federal reform.

Early in May, Gablenz arrived at Berlin with an introduction from Mensdorff, who had, naturally, given him a friendly reception and advised that the Prussian Government should in the first instance be consulted. It might seem strange that the Austrian Government, in the midst of its armaments, should have paid any attention to these proposals. But they contained nothing fundamentally adverse to the ideas of Bismarck (who can hardly be supposed to have been absolutely wedded to the principle of a national assembly) or unacceptable to King William. After conference, Bismarck, therefore, apprised the Austrian Government that, while rejecting all Federal interference in the Schleswig-Holstein question, the Prussian Government was not adverse to a direct negotiation with Austria concerning it, and that there was no objection on the part of the Prussian Government to proceeding on the basis of Gablenz's proposals. He pleasantly added that, if there was any Austrian intention of gratifying the French desire for German territory, it would be easy to crush this by an

appeal to national feeling. But the negotiations, thus begun not without promise, came to nothing. Though Mensdorff and Esterházy were conciliatory, and though the alarm created by the Auxerre speech was a strong argument in favour of a reconciliation with Prussia, the feeling of the war-party was too strong; and in Gablenz's scheme there was an element of great uncertainty—the acceptance by Bavaria and the other south-German states of the Austrian military command. Still, on Gablenz's return to Berlin, Bismarck went further into the proposals; Prince Albrecht of Prussia was suggested as the new ruler of Schleswig-Holstein, and, besides some lesser changes, it was proposed to safeguard the sovereignty of the rulers of the secondary states and to summon to Weimar a conference between their Governments and the Prussian to discuss the amended scheme. On the whole, Bismarck favoured it, and, under the influence of von der Goltz's reports, let Austria know that he thought it should be followed by an Austro-Prussian combination against France. Manteuffel, who had conferred with General von Gablenz on his brother's plan, was at least for adopting a decisive course with regard to it. But the Austrian Government was not to be tempted by the prospect of a French war, though Strassburg was held out to it as the prize of victory[1]. Nor would it consent once more (as at Gastein) to turn its back on the secondary states, and to agree to a bipartition of the imperial authority with Prussia. At this very moment, Austria was carrying on the struggle against Prussia on behalf of those states, at the Frankfort Diet, where, on May 19th, a more or less formal proposal of a general disarmament having been brought forward by the Bamberg group (it was passed on the 24th), her representative had directed attention to the pressure being put upon the Hanoverian Government by Prussia. About the same date (May 20th), a resolution

[1] Cf. W. Busch, *Bismarck*, etc., p. 71.

passed by the deputies of German Chambers (*Abgeordnetentag*) assembled at Frankfort anathematised those who should imperil German territory in their negotiations with foreign Powers; and the united assōciations of Schleswig-Holstein explicitly assailed the unpatriotic and humiliating policy of the Prussian cabinet[1].

On May 22nd, Mensdorff announced at Munich Austria's intention to refer the final decision of the future government of Schleswig-Holstein to the Diet, and at the same time to summon the Holstein Estates. To continue indefinitely two lines of policy diametrically opposed to each other was impossible; the financial difficulty, which was always present with Austria, demanded decisive action; and, on May 28th, the Gablenz scheme was 'for the present' laid aside. An attempt at mediation by the Grand-duke of Weimar had the same fate.

There now remained only the Emperor Napoleon and the congress, for which his invitations were issued on May 24th, followed immediately by similar notes from the Russian and British Governments. The day originally named for the meeting of the congress was June 12th, little more than a month before the date of the expiration of the Prusso-Italian treaty. There were doubts at Berlin whether the Italian Government would adhere to the Prussian alliance which the Emperor had advised it to conclude, if the tenour of his counsels were to change. And such a change, with the opportunity of the congress for urging a European policy in accordance with it, seemed far from improbable. The time appeared to have at last arrived when France might speak a decisive word as to that policy. The Danish War had been undertaken against her wish, and she had had no say as to the peace, except concerning the treatment of the Danish inhabitants of northern Schleswig. After the Franco-British suggestion of

[1] E. Ollivier, vol. VIII, pp. 122–3.

an exchange of Venetia for the Danubian Principalities had been allowed to drop, Prince Charles of Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen, an officer in the Prussian army, had, with the tacit consent of the King of Prussia as the head of his family, accepted the throne of Roumania, to which he had been elected on April 20th and of which he had taken possession on May 20th. The diplomatic anti-Prussian activity of the French agents at the secondary Courts (such as Dresden) rose to its height and, among the ways of averting war that still remained open, the fall of Bismarck, perhaps with von der Goltz as his successor, was still thought quite possible[1].

Though neither Prussia nor Italy had many expectations to found on the congress, both Powers signified (May 29th and June 1st) their willingness to attend it, in accordance with the invitations issued to them and the Germanic Confederation. On the other hand, Austria, armed like Prussia, though prepared on certain conditions to cede Venetia, was resolved not to allow this cession to be imposed on her by the deliberations of the proposed congress. The subjects to be discussed had been ultimately defined as the question of the Elbe duchies, 'the Italian difference' and the reforms to be applied to the German Federal pact, in so far as they might affect the balance of Europe[2]. But the Austrian Government, though it could not be blind to the consequences of its decision, had resolved that it would not allow the question of the cession of Venetia to be brought up under the head of the 'Italian difference'

[1] For an interesting survey of these relations, from the French point of view, see *Les Origines Diplomatiques de la Guerre de* 1870–1, particularly vols. VIII and IX (from March to June 1866), Paris, 1914.

[2] The phrase 'Italian difference' had, at the request of Russia and Great Britain, been substituted for 'guarantee of the Temporal Power of the Pope,' inserted in deference to clerical feeling in France and as a timely warning to Italy.

for settlement at the congress. The cession could not be made till after a campaign and the satisfaction of Austria's military honour. This of course did not imply unwillingness on her part, in the event of a victorious campaign, to cede Venetia in exchange for Silesia; and her offer to this effect—Venetia to be ceded to France, in the first instance, for transference to Italy—was repeated through Gramont at Paris on May 24th. On the 28th, Mensdorff accepted the congress, but on two conditions—the one, that the congress must abstain from discussing any territorial gain to a belligerent state; the other, that the Pope should be admitted to the congress. The former condition made the congress impossible; the latter was an obstacle almost gratuitously added.

Though he could make no secret of the failure of the expedient on which he had fallen back, or of his recognition of the quarter in which lay the responsibility of the failure, the Emperor Napoleon, apart from any cooling in his recent relations with Prussia, was still strongly impressed with the superiority of Austria's chances in the coming war, especially if she should succeed in bringing about a severance between the interests of Prussia and those of Italy. He therefore offered to Austria the conditions of a settlement which she had proposed to him early in May—the neutrality of France and, so far as France could assure it, of Italy, and the cession of Venetia to Italy through France—with, however, the important omission of the provision making the cession of Venetia dependent on the conquest of Silesia. A clause was, also, added to the proposed treaty, by which Austria would bind herself not to seek to establish in Germany the supreme authority of a single state by territorial changes disturbing the balance of power in Europe. In return, the Emperor Napoleon undertook, in transferring the ceded province of Venetia, to maintain the Temporal Power within its present limits, and to recognise the inviolability of Austria's

new Italian frontier towards Italy. This treaty, of which, as signed on June 12th, the Duke of Saxe-Coburg is said to have brought the news to Berlin, has been very diversely judged. Sybel's verdict that through it France sacrificed Italy's unity to Austria, and Austria Germany's independence to France is avowedly hypothetical, so far as the latter part of it is concerned, since no German compensations, eventual or other, are mentioned in the treaty[1]. On the other hand, for Italy and her future it was full of danger, and the revulsion of feeling which it produced in Italy, from King Victor Emmanuel downwards, against Napoleon and France would be wholly painful, did it not attest the patriotism of spirit which actuated the King and the national party[2].

With Prussia, the Emperor Napoleon abstained from concluding any treaty of neutrality; and the triple alliance between France, Italy and Prussia suggested by Prince Napoleon, with the assent of the Prince de Carignan, was out of the question, even had Bismarck been induced to agree to the acquisition by France of Luxemburg and the frontiers of 1814, or of French-speaking Switzerland and Piedmont, which were proposed as suitable accompaniments[3]. From Austria, the Emperor Napoleon had to gain the acquisition of Venetia for Italy, though he had miscalculated the spirit of that nation in believing her ready to

[1] See Sybel, vol. IV, pp. 300 ff.; cf. Rothan, pp. 166 ff. I notice no mention of the subject in the Duke's Memoirs, where he says that he left Berlin on May 29th; nor does he seem to have returned thither till July 1st. Bernhardi, vol. VIII, p. 359, mentions, on Max Duncker's authority, the communication by the Duke of Coburg on May 27th of an Austro-French agreement to the above effect.

[2] Concerning these relations, and the reserve of La Marmora, as a consistent partisan of the French alliance, see the vivid narrative of Bernhardi, vol. VIII, *ad in.*

[3] See Rothan, *La Politique Française*, pp. 172 ff. These proposals were made known by Bismarck at the outbreak of the war of 1870.

accept the prize, *quocunque modo* obtained. On June 6th Bismarck informed the French ambassador of the final revision of the Prussian plan of Federal reform—viz.: the exclusion of Austria from the Confederation. The Emperor perceived that his interference with the German War could only begin after it had reached a point which he could not at present determine; in the meantime, the stronger his hold upon Italy, and the weaker Prussia's, the better seemed his chance of ultimately exerting a controlling influence. The Prusso-Italian treaty, whether it existed or not[1], was, from this point of view, against his interest; and his advice to Italy was, in any case, to carry on war against Austria without energy. In the manifesto which he put forth on June 15th, in the form of a letter to Drouyn de Lhuys, he stated that at the congress he would have desired to obtain for the secondary states of Germany a stronger organisation and greater power; for Prussia, more 'homogeneity' and force in the north; for Austria, the maintenance of her great position in Germany. But, if there was to be war instead of peace, no question affecting the interests of France should be settled without her assent[2].

In Germany, events had, in the meantime, rapidly succeeded one another. On June 1st, Austria declared to the Diet, in reply to its motion for disarmament, that she had been obliged to arm in consequence of Prussia's attempt, with the aid of an Italian alliance, to enforce her claims on Schleswig-Holstein; and that she could not disarm until the restoration of a constitutional state of things; pending which, she committed the affairs of

[1] Nigra's circuitous statement (La Marmora, p. 310), that the Emperor Napoleon had told him that King William had pledged his word of honour to the Emperor of Austria, that the real (*vero*) treaty between Prussia and Italy existed was—whatever view may be taken of it—made in a letter dated June 12th.

[2] See for the letter Ollivier, vol. VIII, pp. 186–9.

Schleswig-Holstein to the Diet for settlement and had ordered the summons of the Holstein Estates. Though, hereupon, Moltke advocated the commencement of operations on June 5th, King William desired more solid grounds for a declaration of war, and Bismarck had to content himself with a direct protest at Vienna against the violation of the Convention of Gastein. On June 4th, he followed up this protest by a circular asserting that Austria (who had made the congress impossible) was designedly forcing on a war, and on the 5th, *more suo*, he published, in the Berlin official paper, the clause in the secret treaty of January 16th, 1864, binding Austria and Prussia to joint action with regard to the future of the duchies[1]. On the 9th followed an Austrian and a Prussian statement to the Diet, with mutual recriminations which it would be useless to recapitulate, and, on the 10th, Bismarck communicated to all the German Governments an elaborate draft of the new Federal constitution proposed by Prussia—comprising the exclusion of Austria, the division of the military command between Prussia and Bavaria, and the summoning of a national assembly directly elected by universal suffrage, which was to share the control of affairs with the Diet and concern itself chiefly with internal matters.

A thrill ran through the states of the north, whose populations, in their representative bodies, had either already declared their Prussian sympathies, or were on the point of avowing them; but the Bavarian Government, with which Bismarck had, to the last, sought to keep in touch, still hesitated, together with Württemberg. On June 11th, von der Pfordten, while adjuring Bismarck to believe in his goodwill to Prussia, entreated him still to make war impossible by renouncing the annexation of

[1] Cf. pp. 147–8, *ante*; Rothan, *La Politique Française*, p. 166 and note.

Schleswig-Holstein. But it was precisely in this 'northern mark of Germany,' where the conflict had taken its origin, that the signal was to be given for its actual outbreak. In the Federal fortresses of the south-west, conflict between Austrian and Prussian troops had been avoided by a substitution for them of garrisons of Bavarians or soldiers of lesser states; but in Schleswig Manteuffel had 16,000 Prussians under his command, while in Holstein Gablenz commanded a body of 4800 troops. Inasmuch as Prussia resolved to place a force of 5000 in observation in Lauenburg, and an ironclad and a few gunboats in the Elbe below Hamburg, everything had been done to provoke a conflict here.

On June 5th, Gablenz, in accordance with his instructions from Vienna and an announcement made at the Diet four days earlier, summoned the Holstein Estates to Itzehoe for June 11th. He at once (June 6th) received notice from Manteuffel that this summons could not be persisted in without the assent of the King, and that Prussian garrisons would immediately be laid into Holstein. On the following day, the Austrian commander moved his troops and the Holstein Government to Altona, and Prussian troops crossed the Eider into Holstein. On the 10th, Manteuffel proclaimed that he would take the administration of Holstein into his hands and named Baron K. von Scheel-Plessen civil head of its Government. On the following night, Gablenz, threatened both by a Prussian land-force from Lauenburg and gunboats in the Elbe below Hamburg, withdrew his force across the river, and conducted it through Hanover, Hesse and Bavaria to Bohemia. The Schleswig-Holstein part of the war had not taken long to settle. With, or in the wake of, the Austrians, Duke Frederick of Augustenburg had quitted Kiel. The unfortunate Prince's part was played out, though some time passed before he knew it[1].

[1] Cf. Hohenlohe, *Denkwürdigkeiten*, vol. 1, p. 163.

On June 11th, the Diet was informed by Austria that Prussia, by her arbitrary action in Holstein, had offended against the provisions of the Final Act (of 1820) and had thereby made the interference of the Diet necessary. Austria, therefore, moved the mobilisation of the entire Federal army, with the exception of the Prussian army corps forming part of it, and the appointment of a Federal commander-in-chief. Thus, the Confederation was called upon to arm, because Prussia had broken a Convention (that of Gastein) to which the Confederation had not been a party, and which indeed had been adverse to its wishes. Beust, to his credit, perceived this; but the time had passed for a correction of procedure or for falling back, in the first instance, as the Final Act required, upon the *Austrägal* or any other method of adjustment, which would undoubtedly have delayed the outbreak of war for many a month. It can hardly be denied that Austria had by her motion placed herself formally in the wrong, and that Bismarck, therefore, could afford to allow a vote to be passed fixing the date of the decisive vote on the Austrian motion for June 14th. On the 12th, Karolyi was recalled from Berlin and Werther received his passports at Vienna; and, on the same day, it was made known to all the German Courts that a vote in favour of the Austrian motion would be regarded as tantamount to a declaration of war against Prussia. Again on the same day, Bismarck submitted to the King and the Ministerial Council proposals as to Prussia's action in reply to the threatened Federal execution, by which, before beginning operations against Austria, Prussia would make herself safe in the rear. An *ultimatum* was to be presented to the Governments of Nassau, Hesse-Cassel, Hanover and Saxony on the day (June 15th) after the decisive vote, calling upon them to put a stop to their armaments, dismiss their mobilised troops, and accept the Prussian proposals of Federal reform laid before the Diet. If they

assented, their dominions and sovereignty would be assured to them, and the Prussian troops drawn up against them were to be without delay moved to Silesia. In the case of a negative or evasive reply, war was to be at once declared against them. The King approved. Grand-ducal Hesse would, in the event of war, be neutralised by Electoral Hesse. As to Bavaria and Württemberg, the former was probably, and the latter certainly, insufficiently advanced in its armaments, and Bismarck's hopes in von der Pfordten were not quite extinct.

Among the secondary and lesser Courts there was great dismay, and not a little confusion, as to the action to be taken with regard to the critical vote. Napoleon's letter to the Legislative Body, rejecting any idea of the extension of the French frontier, unless the map of Europe should be changed for the benefit of a Great Power, was dated June 13th, and can hardly have become known in time to exercise influence upon the decision[1]. When the day for it (June 14th) arrived, Kübeck brought forward the motion for the mobilisation, in consequence of Prussia's unlawful conduct, of the whole Federal forces except the Prussian *corps d'armée* included in them, and announced Austria's vote in its favour, merely adding that she had completed the mobilisation of the three corps which it was her duty to furnish. Prussia, in her turn, protested against the discussion of any motion in both form and matter contravening the Federal constitution. Bavaria, with whom Saxony, Hesse-Darmstadt and, in substance, Hanover, afterwards concurred, declared herself in favour of the motion, in so far as the corps of the secondary and lesser states were concerned, but with the omission of the reference to Prussia's unlawful conduct in the matter of the Gastein Convention, with which the Confederation had no concern. Electoral Hesse, in substance, supported the

[1] Rothan, pp. 176 ff.

motion; so did Nassau, whose colleague in the XIIIth Curia, Brunswick, opposed it. The other Curiae—Luxemburg, the grand-ducal and ducal Saxon Houses (except Meiningen), the Mecklenburgs, Oldenburg (with Anhalt and Schwarzburg) and the Free Towns (except Frankfort)—declared against it; Baden was in favour of a Committee and reserved its vote; the petty states forming the XVIth Curia—Waldeck, the Reusses and the rest—were partly in disagreement with one another, and partly their plenipotentiaries were without instructions. The vote was hereupon taken on the motion as modified in accordance with the declaration of Bavaria; when nine votes were declared by Kübeck to have been given in its favour, and six against (including Baden, but not including Prussia, who did not vote at all)[1]. Hereupon, Savigny at once rose to declare that the proposal, and still more the acceptance, of the motion contravened the fundamental laws of the Confederation. Prussia, therefore, regarded the Federal agreement hitherto obtaining as broken and extinct, but was at the same time prepared, on the basis of the proposals for reform which she laid before the assembly, to enter into a new Federation with those Governments which would join her for that end. Savigny then declared his duties at Frankfort at an end. Kübeck, in reply, referred to the indissolubility of the Confederation, casting the whole blame for what had happened upon Prussia, against whose action he asked those present to join in a final protest. The majority assented, and the Federal Diet had held its last sitting—though the Rump, at Augsburg, did not separate till August 24th.

In Berlin, so soon as Savigny's telegraphic message arrived, the instructions prepared went out to Hanover and Cassel. On the same day, a military convention was

[1] Cf. as to the unexpected items in this narrow vote Friesen, *Erinnerungen*, vol. II, pp. 165–6.

concluded by Bavaria and Austria at Olmütz, though it was kept secret for some days. Of the other Governments, Baden alone had sought to act in this sense; but she was speedily obliged to fall in with the majority. Thus, in the form of a division between north and south, though in the case of the north not with an unbroken front, the German Civil War had broken out at last. It was to decide the issue between the two Great German Powers which had at intervals been forcing itself upon the nation since they had made peace more than a century ago; it was to bring about the union of the north as a step towards a wider union; and the effect produced by its result beyond the Rhine was, in the near future, to lead to yet another momentous struggle.

Italy's declaration of war, sent by La Marmora to the Commander-in-chief of the Southern army of Austria, followed on June 20th, and the war opened three days afterwards on the Mincio.

CHAPTER IV

THE AUSTRO-PRUSSIAN WAR

Before accepting the policy towards Austria and the other German states pressed upon him by Bismarck, King William I required to be satisfied that, in case of war, he could reasonably hope for victory.

The quality and strength of his army he had himself secured. At seventeen, he had fought in the great campaign of 1814 against Napoleon. During the next ten years, he had served from major to lieutenant-general, commanding in turn every unit from battalion to army corps. During his brother's reign, he was the most influential personage in the army and had a large share in its supervision. His numerous military papers of that period show full knowledge of its working, a shrewd judgment and a grasp of principles. In 1832–5, he had struggled hard, but in vain, for the retention of the three years' service with the colours. He had presided over the commissions which produced the modernised infantry drill book of 1847 and revised the cavalry training. In 1858 he had had the whole of the infantry armed with the needle-gun. By the reorganisation of 1860, which had almost produced its full results by 1866, he had obtained a homogeneous field force of nine army corps, each of which could in a fortnight be fully equipped for the field and brought up to its war strength, numbering 37,000 men for the Guard and 35,500 for each of the eight provincial army corps, without touching the *Landwehr* and supplementary reserve, which, between

them, could furnish 129,000 men for garrisons and a reserve of 100,000 for the field-army. This gave Prussia for her population of eighteen millions a total force of 550,000 men; while Austria with thirty-five millions had not more than 540,000. He had been very attentive to the training of the troops, especially of the officers. According to Napoleon, the ideal army would be one in which every officer knew what to do in any situation in which he might find himself in the course of a campaign. In Prussia, this kind of competence was aimed at by means of periodical manœuvres, in which officers had to lead their commands one against the other, in conditions so far as possible resembling those of war. In 1843 Prince William wrote: 'Our field manœuvres, in which the leaders are merely given the general idea and are left free to make their own plans and movements, constitute the only right way of coming to know the officers in command[1].' After a quarter of a century of such manœuvres, in the course of which he promoted or retired the leaders according to the proofs they gave of tactical skill or of the lack of it, the King might hope that his army came near to Napoleon's conception. He meant to command it himself and had found a strategical adviser on whom he could rely. In March 1865 his intimate, Edwin von Manteuffel, wrote to Roon: 'the King has confidence in Moltke as Chief of the General Staff. At the back of his mind is the idea that he may yet command the army in a war; and in this connexion he has grown accustomed to Moltke[2].'

The question of strategy in relation to the policy proposed by Bismarck was first raised at the Ministerial Council of May 29th, 1865, when, in reply to the King, Moltke said: 'I have to ask myself, can Prussia undertake the conflict

[1] *Militärische Schriften weiland Kaiser Wilhelm des Grossen Majestät*, Berlin, 1897, vol. I, p. 580.

[2] Roon, *Denkwürdigkeiten*, vol. II, p. 227.

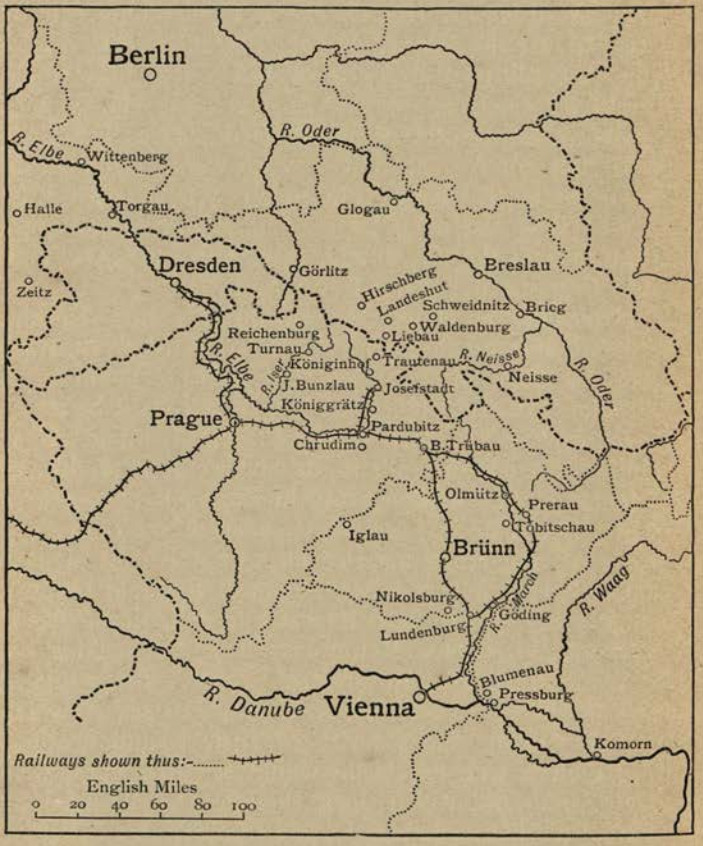
with Austria? It would lead too far if I were to go into details here. But, as the result of my investigations, I may say that, apart from the excellence of our army, the numerical superiority at the decisive point can be obtained[1].' At the Council of February 28th, 1866, Moltke set out the military strength of the states that would probably be engaged, adding, as was seen above, that the active advance of Italy would be indispensable. The highest effort of Austria in that case would be an army of 240,000 men in Bohemia, to which, without taking the *Landwehr* into the field, Prussia could oppose an equal number in Lusatia and Silesia, after leaving 52,000 men against Bavaria and South Germany[2].

Moltke had thoroughly thought out the war. He had considered, first, how to defend Prussia against an Austrian attack and, then, how to pass from defence to the invasion of Austria. Austria's object in such a war must be either to overthrow Prussia, in which case her army would aim at Berlin, or to reconquer Silesia, in which case it would aim at Breslau. An Austrian army in the angle of northern Bohemia would be in the position nearest to either. The move most dangerous for Prussia would be an advance towards Berlin. The best way to meet it would be by a Prussian army, placed with its back to the Elbe between Torgau and Wittenberg, facing eastwards and striking the left flank of the Austrian advance. The Austrian line of retreat would then be to the east towards Breslau, which the Austrians for the security of their communications during their march on Berlin would try to occupy with a small force, and which must therefore be defended by a minor Prussian force based upon the fortress of Glogau. This flank defence against an Austrian advance towards

[1] Lettow-Vorbeck, *Geschichte des Krieges von* 1866, vol. III. p. 472 (cf. *ante*, pp. 196–7).

[2] *Ib.*, p. 474 (cf. *ante*, p. 212).

Berlin would be still more powerful if the Prussians could occupy Dresden before the Austrians and thus hold all



The Theatre of War

the crossings of the Elbe. If the Austrian main army should move on Breslau, Moltke would bring it back by

advancing with his own main army into Bohemia. In order to make sure of Dresden, the Prussians must invade Saxony by surprise. To that end, war must be declared suddenly, without notice, so that neither Saxony nor Austria could have begun to prepare. Saxony must be invaded instantly by Prussian troops still on a peace footing, and on the same day the whole Prussian army must be mobilised. The Prussian forces, in that case, would certainly be ready and on the frontier before the Austrians, for in Prussia each army corps could be made ready in its peace quarters in a fortnight, and the arrangements with the railway lines admitted of the movement of a complete army corps for any distance in from eight to twelve days, provided that each corps not near enough to the frontier to march there in that time could be provided with a through line to itself. Thus, on the 25th day from the order to mobilise, all the army corps could be at the railheads, one of which would be Dresden, to be seized on the second day. Of the nine army corps, one would have to be left on the Rhine to deal with the German states hostile to Prussia, its action being prepared by the seizure of the Federal fortress of Mainz on the day of declaration of war. The other eight would be sent against Austria and placed, on the 25th day, three at Dresden (94,000 men), three at Görlitz (99,000), and two at Schweidnitz (54,000). The two armies at Dresden and Görlitz would be strong enough to defeat any Austrian army that might attack them; for the Austrians could not have their whole force put on a war footing and moved into Bohemia in less than six weeks. The Prussian forces therefore would march from Dresden and Görlitz towards the Iser and then, side by side, towards the Elbe near Königgrätz, where the two corps from Schweidnitz would join them by way of Trautenau. In the region of the Upper Elbe, these combined forces would probably meet the Austrian army, not yet at its full strength

of 240,000 men, and would after defeating it take the direction through Iglau towards Vienna.

This was Moltke's plan, framed first in 1860 and matured by years of reconsideration. He had kept the Austrian army under close observation since 1859—in 1862 he published anonymously a critical account of the campaign of Magenta and Solferino—and had worked out every one of the Austrian moves possible during each phase of his own projected operations, never resting until he had seen his way to meet it with superior forces at the point of probable collision. He had thus done all that was possible beforehand to secure victory on each of the several hypotheses.

But Moltke's plan was destined to receive rude shocks which would have upset a structure less compact. In March, 1866, the Austrians began to prepare for their mobilisation, resolved upon as early as April 27th, and carried out by orders issued between that date and May 5th. In Prussia the order for five corps to mobilise was not given till May 3rd, and for the other four not till May 12th; and, even then, there was no visible prospect of a declaration of war. The sudden irruption into Saxony and the collection of three Prussian army corps at Dresden was therefore out of the question. Still, Moltke held to his plan for an advance into Bohemia and for ultimately forming his right wing on the line Dresden-Görlitz; but he had to be content with placing that wing in the first instance further back, in Prussian, not in Saxon, territory. The corps from Prussian Saxony, Brandenburg and Pomerania were placed east of the Elbe facing the northern border of Saxony, forming the First army under the command of Prince Frederick Charles. Those of Posen and Silesia marched to Landeshut and Waldenburg and became the Second army, under the command of the Crown-prince of Prussia. Then, the corps from Prussia proper was brought by train to Görlitz, midway between the two armies, and the

Guard set marching from Berlin towards the First army. Finally, the corps from Rhenish Prussia and one of the two divisions of that in Westphalia were sent to Halle and Zeitz, close to the western border of Saxony. The other division of the Westphalian corps was kept at Minden.

These last movements throw a flash of light on Prussian policy and German conditions. Hanover and Hesse-Cassel were Austrian in sympathy, and Moltke had planned the destruction of them both. Yet, during the period from May 27th to June 5th, at the height of the crisis when war may be said to have been in sight, twelve trains a day carrying a Prussian army corps from Coblenz to Halle passed through the town of Hanover, and eight trains a day carrying a Prussian division from Westphalia to the neighbourhood of Zeitz through Cassel, without remonstrance or interference on the part of the respective Governments. Treaties, no doubt, existed entitling Prussia to move her troops during peace through the territories which separated her western from her central provinces; and, probably, the two Governments feared that to stop the trains would precipitate Prussian military action against them. Possibly, too, the eastward movement of the bulk of the Prussian forces from the Rhine and Westphalia seemed to the Courts of Hanover and Cassel a deliverance from danger. But for the overthrow of these Governments Moltke did not need these troops. Each of the eight provincial corps had a regiment in garrison either at some fortress or in Schleswig—two of them had two; and of these a field division was formed, under Manteuffel, in Schleswig and another, under General von Beyer, at Wetzlar, where, besides seeming to threaten Frankfort, it was, also, within a few days' march of Cassel. When it was agreed that the Austrian and Prussian troops should leave Frankfort and Mainz, the Prussian regiments from those cities were sent to swell Beyer's division. To make up for the absence

of the division left at Minden a whole corps of *Landwehr* was sent from Berlin to reinforce the Elbe army.

On the 25th of May, Moltke reported to the King: 'On the 5th of June the deployment of all the troops of nine army corps along the frontiers of Saxony and Bohemia will be finished. From the military point of view, there can be no doubt that after that we must not postpone our action for a day.' His plan involved the prompt advance of the Elbe and First armies through Dresden and Görlitz into Bohemia, which would prevent an Austrian invasion of Silesia. But the King did not see his way to striking the first blow. Moltke then determined to bring his right nearer to his left. The Elbe army marched round the Saxon frontier to the Elbe at Torgau, keeping in Prussian territory; the Second army marched eastward towards Görlitz and the Ist corps from Görlitz to Hirschberg, to join the Second army. These movements were completed by June 8th; but there was still no immediate prospect of the King's consenting to the invasion of Saxony and Austria. On the 9th came a proposal from the head-quarters of the Crown-prince. The Austrians were gathered in force at Olmütz and might any day invade Silesia. Would not the King approve of the Second army moving from Landeshut and Waldenburg to the line of the river Neisse, where it would be well placed for meeting the probable invasion, and might it not for that purpose be reinforced? This proposal upset Moltke's plan. He would have forestalled an Austrian invasion of Silesia by the advance of the two armies of his right into Bohemia. Yet he felt that, if this advance were delayed indefinitely, the local defence of Silesia might become necessary. He, therefore, accepted the proposal and secured the reinforcement of the Second army, not only by the Ist corps but also by the Guard, which was pushed on by rail and road. On the 18th of June, the Second army stood on the line of

the Neisse, and, at the same time, the First army, which had continued its eastward march, was passing Görlitz. The three armies were several marches apart, the distances being ninety miles from Torgau to Görlitz and 110 from Görlitz to Neisse.

In 1848 and 1849, the Austrian army in the strong hand of Radetzky had saved the monarchy. In the subsequent years it had been effectively reorganised, subject to the limitations imposed by the usual embarrassments of Austria's finance. The troops were raised, partly by conscription and partly by voluntary enlistment, the men being engaged for eight years with the colours and two in reserve, but they were usually sent on furlough as reservists after two or three years' service. The diversity of nationalities was a difficulty. Ten different languages were spoken by the troops, and it was not thought safe to quarter a regiment in the province in which it was recruited. Accordingly, on mobilisation, men on furlough had to travel to their probably distant regiment, or the regiment had to move to its recruiting district to pick them up, either process taking a long time. The army corps system, not being on a territorial basis, did not facilitate mobilisation, and indeed had not been uniformly carried through. In 1866 seven army corps existed; but a great many troops belonged to no army corps at all. The peace strength was about 250,000 men, with 20,000 in the depôts. The war strength was 380,000, with 160,000 in depôts and garrisons. To call out 270,000 reservists and distribute them among their scattered regiments was a complicated business. In the north, only two railway lines connected the rest of the monarchy with Moravia, one from Cracow to Prerau and the other from Vienna to Lundenburg. From Moravia only one single track line, that from Böhmisch-Trübau to Pardubitz, led to Bohemia. It would

take a long time therefore to collect a large army either in Moravia or Bohemia. The infantry was armed with the Lorenz rifle, a muzzle-loader. The men were well disciplined and trained, but had been practised chiefly in the evolutions of columns and taught to expect victory from bayonet charges in column rather than from the skilful use of the bullet. The artillery, after 1859, had been armed with rifled guns which it had been admirably trained to use. The cavalry was first-rate. The weak point of this army lay in the officers of high rank, who were selected for social rather than for military qualifications, the important posts being, for the most part, distributed among the members of the six hundred families of the high nobility[1]. These noblemen were not always examples of punctuality and exactitude. In 1859, the defeat of Magenta was due mainly to the careless delay of Count Gyulai, and that of Solferino to the impossibility, in the early hours of the morning, of finding the Emperor, without whom no orders could be given.

After Bismarck's note of February 26th and Mensdorff's unconciliatory reply, it became necessary to face the probability of war. Early in March, conferences were held under the presidency of the Emperor to consider the necessary preparations. As there was no intention to make concessions either to Prussia or to Italy, two armies must be formed. It was decided to employ seven army corps against Prussia and three against Italy. The Ministry of War undertook to have all the corps ready and moved to the chosen regions in seven weeks from the order, and in the meantime pushed on its preparations.

A vital matter was the choice of commanders. The Emperor had no thought of repeating his experience of 1859. In that year, it had been intended, in case of a campaign in southern Germany against the French, to

[1] Friedjung, *Der Kampf um die Vorherrschaft*, etc., vol. I, p. 346.

give the command to Archduke Albrecht, who, as the son and pupil of Archduke Charles, had received not merely a liberal education, but also thorough instruction in the larger aspects of war. He had since then studied the problem of a war against Prussia and had had prepared by his *protégé* Major-general Krismanič an essay on the military geography of the probable theatre of war. But now, in 1866, representations were made to the Emperor that the appointment of the Archduke to the command against Prussia would, in case of defeat, occasion an outburst of resentment against the imperial house, and that it would be better to give the command to Benedek, at that time commander of the Austrian forces in Italy, the most distinguished and most popular of all the Austrian generals.

Feldzeugmeister[1] Ludwig Ritter von Benedek, born at Ödenburg in Hungary in 1804, a Magyar protestant of a family of the lesser nobility, had risen from ensign to commander-in-chief by merit without connexions or influence. In 1846, when he was a lieutenant-colonel on the staff at Lemberg, there occurred a dangerous rising. While the generals were all paralysed with terror, Benedek set out with less than 500 men to attack the insurgents, dispersed them at Gdow and crushed the rebellion. In 1848–9, he played a brilliant part in the campaigns of Radetzky in Italy and of Haynau in Hungary, and won the admiration of both these commanders. In 1859, at the battle of Solferino, in which the French defeated the Austrians, Benedek's corps on the right wing beat off all the attacks of the whole Sardinian army. He had saved the honour of Austria. From that time onwards, he was the first soldier in the Emperor's service. Benedek, however, met the Emperor's offer of the command against Prussia with

[1] *Feldzeugmeister* and *Feldmarschal-Lieutenant* are the Austrian equivalents of *General* and *Lieutenant-general*.

a flat refusal. He knew himself and the limits of his powers. He was a thorough soldier, but no strategist. His whole soul was in the army; the traditions of the service were his religion. He once wrote, in a general order, that the army regulations were his creed and his philosophy. He was a first-rate leader of troops on the battlefield, where his eye was quick, his decision prompt, his will of iron. In his letters to his wife he attributed his success to his 'superior courage' and his 'luck,' and repudiated all 'pretensions to scientific strategy.' What he knew of the army and of war he had learned by experience, for he was neither a student nor a thinker and never read a serious book. In conversation with a cultivated officer like Ramming, who was a military historian and strategist, Benedek felt himself out of his depth. He thought more of dispatch in the conduct of military business than of the theory of war; and in 1861, when there was a question of appointing Ramming chief of the staff of the army, he opposed the selection and secured the appointment of his friend Henikstein on the ground that, though devoid of the 'strategic spark,' he had business-like habits, would see to it that letters were promptly answered and delivered and would put a stop to the unpunctuality and carelessness that had been the curse of Austrian headquarters in the field. In Italy Benedek felt at home. He knew the troops, who adored him; he knew their generals; he knew every inch of the ground, and he knew the enemy. The staff at Verona was a second family to him, and its chief, Major-general von John, had the needed 'strategic spark.' But to get to know a strange country, and in it to command an army of 200,000 men, was a new adventure to which, at sixty-one, he did not feel equal. Yet in his mental and spiritual orbit there was a centre and a sun—the Emperor in whose service his life had been spent. It was hard for him not to meet the Emperor's wish. This was

the fulcrum from which Benedek might be moved, and every lever was applied to it. His best friends among the generals, including Archduke Albrecht, urged him to take the post of danger; it was put to him that, as a loyal soldier, he could not leave his Emperor in the lurch. At last he accepted the command with the resignation of a man who submits to his fate.

Benedek, keeping Henikstein at the head of his staff, required a director of the bureau of operations, and would have liked John, in whom he had faith. But John was wanted for the Archduke in Italy, and Benedek mistrusted Ramming and Kuhn, the two best-known strategists in the army. The Archduke recommended Major-general Krismanič, whom Benedek accepted. It was believed that Prussia would be first ready for the field and would assume the offensive, and it therefore seemed unsafe to fix the place of concentration in Bohemia, where the Austrian army might be attacked before its preparations were complete. Accordingly it was decided to place one army corps in Bohemia, in order to support the Saxon troops if they should have to withdraw from their own country, and to assemble the other six near the great fortress Olmütz in Moravia.

On May 26th Benedek established his headquarters at Olmütz; and, by June 10th, although there were only two railway lines to Moravia, six army corps, three cavalry divisions and the reserve artillery had reached Moravia. This was a most creditable achievement. The Austrian railways had moved twenty-two trains a day, while the Prussians even on their two-track lines had moved only twelve. But the troops were still spread out along the sides of the enormous triangle formed by the railways from Böhmisch-Trübau to Lundenburg and to Prerau,—four corps on the western line, sixty miles long, and two on the eastern with the cavalry divisions between Olmütz and

Brünn. Several thousand belated men came in between the 10th and the 15th, and the supply trains were not quite ready till the 21st.

Campaign against Hanover

The Austrian plans of April made no provision for concerted action with the German states on the side of Austria. It was not till June 8th that it was arranged that, in case of a Prussian invasion of Saxony, the Saxon army

corps should withdraw to Bohemia to join the Austrians. On June 14th an agreement was made at Olmütz between Benedek and the Bavarian General von der Tann, who held out hopes that the Bavarian army might join the Austrian army in Bohemia by the end of the month; but, four days later, this plan was repudiated by the Bavarian Government. On June 1st, at a conference at Munich, while Saxony and Bavaria announced that their armies were ready, Württemberg, Baden and Nassau reported that their contingents could not complete their mobilisation before June 15th. Neither Austria nor Bavaria had any military understanding with Hesse-Cassel or Hanover.

The 5th of June, the day when the Prussian army was ready for action, while Austria and her allies still needed ten days for the completion of their concentration, was, as has been seen, chosen by the Austrian Government for the political move in Holstein which precipitated the conflict[1]. The momentous vote of the Diet at Frankfort followed on the 14th; on the 15th Prussia delivered her *ultimatum* to the Courts of Dresden, Hanover and Cassel.

At Hanover[2], on the 14th, Bennigsen urged in the Chamber the dismissal of the Ministry; but the time had passed for any such remedies. On the morning of the 15th, Prince Ysenburg presented the Prussian *ultimatum*, with a demand for an answer in the course of the same day. The blind King George indulged in self-delusive boasts about his army of 50,000 men—its effective force,

[1] *Ante*, p. 235.

[2] For a complete account of Hanoverian affairs from the last years of the reign of King George V to the establishment of the regency of Prince Albrecht of Prussia, see F. von der Wengen, *Geschichte der Kriegsereignisse zwischen Preussen und Hannover*, 1866 (1886); and compare O. Meding (G. Samarow), *Memoiren zur Zeitgeschichte*, vol. II. *Das Jahr 1866* (1881), *passim*.

as the envoy pointed out to him, amounted to less than one-third of that number; and it was not till shortly before midnight that the declaration of war could be delivered to Count Platen on the stairs of his house. As no satisfactory reply had been obtained from Dresden or Cassel, war was at midnight declared upon Saxony and Electoral Hesse also. Orders had been given in advance to the Prussian commanders, and the war began, on the 16th, by the simultaneous invasion of the three states.

The Hanoverian troops were on a peace footing, without ammunition, and on the march towards their camps of exercise. When the Prussian *ultimatum* was received, they were recalled to Hanover and hurried off, the infantry and artillery by train and the cavalry by road, to Göttingen, whither such munitions and equipment were sent after them as could be moved in a few hours from the depôts at Hanover. At Göttingen, where the last troops arrived on the 18th, a great effort was made to put the army into condition to move. King George, with more spirit than judgment, accompanied his army, of which, under pressure from his officers, he gave the command to General von Arendtsschildt. The troops were equipped and provided with the limited ammunition at hand; but supplies and transport were sorely lacking. By the evening of the 20th the force was as ready as it could be made in the trying conditions, the total strength being about 17,000 men.

The Prussian division at Minden, commanded by General von Göben, set out from that place on the 16th and, on the next day, reached Hanover, where it seized vast stores that had been left behind. On the 19th Göben started from Hanover towards Göttingen. Manteuffel, too, from Altona crossed the Elbe to Harburg on the 16th, and, on the 20th, his leading brigade reached Hanover and his second brigade Celle. Beyer's division from Wetzlar was

on the 19th at Cassel, where it made a prisoner of the Elector Frederick William, whose troops, 4200 men, had been sent off by railway to Hersfeld and had thence marched to Hanau[1].

The imperfectly prepared Hanoverian army was hardly a match for a single one of the Prussian divisions. The only course open to it was to march southwards to Bavaria; and there was evidently no time to lose. On the 21st, therefore, the Hanoverians set out from Göttingen for Eisenach, by way of Mühlhausen.

In order to secure cooperation between Göben, Manteuffel and Beyer, they had all been put under the command of Vogel von Falckenstein, the general commanding the VIIIth Prussian army corps. When Moltke at Berlin learned that the Hanoverian army had been collected at Göttingen, he divined that it would try to escape to the south and saw that Göben and Manteuffel at Hanover were too far away to interfere with its march, while it might have passed Eisenach or Gotha before Beyer from Cassel could be there to bar its way. So Moltke proposed to Falckenstein to send Manteuffel's troops by railway through Magdeburg to Eisenach. This seemed an unorthodox proceeding to Falckenstein, who ordered all his three subordinates to march towards Göttingen. The consequence was that, while Beyer was moving from Cassel towards Göttingen, the Hanoverian army marched from Göttingen towards Eisenach, and on the 22nd reached Mühlhausen, with a clear road to the south, except for three or four thousand men, whom, in default of Manteuffel, Moltke had ordered from Gotha to Eisenach and from Erfurt to Gotha. Falckenstein saw that his prey had escaped him, gave up the chase and, on a suggestion made without Moltke's knowledge by

[1] The Elector was removed to Stettin, where he remained till September.

Bismarck, determined to march to Frankfort, the old imperial city being a special object of Prussian illwill.

The Hanoverians had but to march on boldly, and they would have easily overcome the few troops collected at Gotha and Eisenach. But their leaders hesitated, and grasped at a proposal for negotiations, made at the suggestion of King William, who wanted to gain time for his armies to come up with them. This was on the 23rd, when the Hanoverian army reached Langensalza, within a day's march of Gotha. There they halted and lost three days in negotiations which proved fruitless. By that time, Moltke's judgment and King William's peremptory orders had brought to Eisenach a large part of Beyer's and Göben's forces and to Gotha a part of Manteuffel's, under General von Flies. A report reached Berlin that the Hanoverians were retreating towards the Harz mountains, and orders to attack them were sent both to Eisenach and to Gotha. On the 27th, when Göben was kept at Eisenach by a report that the Bavarian army was approaching from the south, Flies fulfilled the King's instructions by marching to Langensalza and attacking the Hanoverians, though they had 17,000 men to his 6000. They were holding a position on the north bank of the river Unstrut, with one battalion on the south bank in the village of Langensalza. Flies struck on their centre, and drove their battalion out of Langensalza and across the river, of which however he failed to force the passage himself. The Hanoverian right then crossed the river, and, wheeling to the left, drove him out of Langensalza. Thereupon he began to retreat; but the Hanoverian cavalry fell upon his retreating troops. He was thoroughly beaten with a loss of 800 killed and wounded and as many prisoners. The Hanoverians had 1400 casualties, due chiefly to the needle-gun. They did not pursue.

Next day Flies was reinforced. But the Hanoverians

were in no condition for another battle, as they were short both of ammunition and provisions. The bulk of Falckenstein's forces were now at hand; and King George, at length aware that his position was hopeless, consented to a capitulation, which was signed on the 29th. The Hanoverian army laid down its arms, and officers and men were sent to their homes.

The disarming of Hanover took more time than had been expected, and, until it had been effected, the King and Moltke remained at Berlin, whence they could best control the wayward Falckenstein, although a guiding hand and spur were, also, sorely needed in one part of the principal theatre of war.

Prince Frederick Charles, who commanded the First army, was a good drill-master, but over-cautious as a commander in the field. Self-conscious and self-willed, he was not fond of advice. The chief of his staff, General von Voigts-Rhetz, though able and broad-minded, concealed neither his dislike of Moltke nor his disbelief in the plan of spreading the army along the frontier. He left the details to the ambitious and industrious quartermaster-general von Stülpnagel, and the large movements were kept by the 'Red Prince,' as Prince Frederick Charles was popularly called, in his own hands.

The Crown-prince, largehearted, openminded and generous, had not had his chief interests in the army, and had strongly opposed the policy that led to the war. But, when the war came, he felt no doubt as to his duty and took up his command with a clear conscience. He had a great regard for Moltke, who had been for some time his personal adjutant and mentor, for his former tutor General von Blumenthal, now chief of his staff, and for General von Stosch, his quartermaster-general, an officer of rare good sense and knowledge of men and affairs.

Campaign in Bohemia

The Crown-prince had the moral courage and the modesty which were not conspicuous in Prince Frederick Charles. As a result of the happy composition of its headquarters, the Second army boldly faced its very real difficulties, while the First was often paralysed by imaginary foes.

Moltke's plan, from the first, had been to advance into Bohemia with three corps from Dresden, three from Görlitz and two from Liebau and Waldenburg. This plan had been upset by the wish of the Crown-prince, inspired by Blumenthal, to move to the Neisse and meet the Austrian army in its supposed advance from Olmütz—a proposal in which, in the circumstances, Moltke had acquiesced. On the 15th of June, when the moment for action came, the Crown-prince was marching with four corps towards the line of the Neisse, where they were not due till the 18th. What was now to be done? The great aim was still to unite the three Prussian armies for battle with the Austrians. In the analysis made by him during the winter, Moltke had expected the Austrian army to be assembled, in the first instance, between Prague and Pardubitz, and yet had decided to unite his own armies by a march through the mountain ranges into Bohemia. The eastward move of the Crown-prince had been suggested when the Austrian army was believed to be assembling, not in Bohemia but at Olmütz in Moravia, much further from the mouths of the passes than Moltke had expected. This belief had, meanwhile, become a certainty; for Moltke had in his hands an order of battle of the Austrian army giving the positions of the troops on June 11th. The three armies could, indeed, be united, if the First and that of the Elbe were to march north of the mountains to Silesia, where the Second army could, if necessary, hasten the junction by retiring to meet them. But that plan would neglect Saxony, which it was desirable to occupy, so as to be in possession of the country when the time should come for negotiations. The

Elbe and the First armies, by marching forward into Saxony and Bohemia, would be drawing nearer to the Second; and the shortest way for the Second to join them was still through the passes which it had lately faced. The Second army might be caught by a part of the Austrian forces, but hardly by the whole Austrian army, of which it was known that three corps on the 11th had been so far behind as Brünn. Moltke decided to carry out his original plan and to let the Elbe army move at once, waiting a day or two to see what the Austrians would do before he ordered the Second army to return to the mountain barrier. The interference of Blumenthal had lost ten days, and the Crown-prince's army might find the passes held against it; but in war risks have to be run, and if the Crown-prince stayed where he was, he might have to face the whole Austrian army.

Accordingly, on June 15th, after the delivery of the Prussian *ultimatum* at Dresden, telegraphic orders were sent that, unless countermanded, General Herwarth was to march next morning on Dresden, and Prince Frederick Charles to occupy the Saxon district of Löbau with a part of the First army. The Saxon army, which had been mobilised and collected at Dresden under the command of the Crown-prince of Saxony, marched on the 17th to join the Austrians in Bohemia.

On the 18th Herwarth entered Dresden; and on the 19th Moltke sent orders to him to march to Stolpen and there to come under the command of Prince Frederick Charles, who was to assume the offensive so soon as the Elbe army came up with his own and to advance with his left wing close to the mountains. The Second army was instructed to move to meet the First in Bohemia and, for that purpose, to begin at once its return to the passes leading to Trautenau and Nachod. As it became clear that the Austrians were not invading Silesia, but marching into Bohemia, Moltke

telegraphed on the 22nd to both Princes the order to advance into Bohemia and to seek to unite in the direction of Gitschin. Prince Frederick Charles was instructed by letter: 'Since the weaker Second army has the more difficult task of issuing from the mountains, it is the more incumbent on the First army, so soon as ever its junction with the force of General Herwarth has been effected, to shorten the crisis by its swift advance.'

What Moltke expected from Prince Frederick Charles was nothing extraordinary. He had noted on the 19th, before sending the orders for an advance: 'General Herwarth marches on the 20th to Stolpen; on the 25th junction at Gitschin of 150,000 men,' i.e. of Prince Frederick Charles and Herwarth. The distances to Gitschin were from Stolpen 75 miles or five marches of 15 miles, and from Görlitz 57 miles, four marches of 14 miles. There were five roads available for five army corps. Both the First and the Second armies, therefore, might well reach the region of Gitschin by the afternoon of the 25th. It was known that up to the 11th of June six of the seven Austrian corps had been in Moravia. It was supposed that the Saxon corps and one Austrian corps, possibly two, were on the Iser. But Frederick Charles on receiving the order of the 22nd telegraphed to ask for the Ist corps to be given to him—he had five—as he was too weak to meet the Austrian forces assembling in Bohemia. Moltke replied by a letter to Stülpnagel, ending: '100,000 men, with Prince Frederick Charles at their head and a reserve of 50,000 men a day's march behind them, have the greatest chance of victory.'

Prince Frederick Charles was eager to open the campaign with a 'brilliant success[1].' Rumour spoke of an Austrian force at Reichenberg, guarding the defile between the Iser

[1] '*Einen möglichst eclatanten Erfolg*' (Prince Frederick Charles to the King. Lettow-Vorbeck, vol. II, p. 109).

mountains and the Lusatian mountains. Determined to crush this force, the Prince spent two days in marshalling five of his six divisions to approach Reichenberg from the north, and sent one to cross and recross the Lusatian mountains so as to come upon Reichenberg from the south. When all was ready on the 24th, the swoop was made. The Austrian force proved to be three squadrons of cavalry, which withdrew in good time. But the First army was so crowded round Reichenberg that its supply and movement alike became difficult. It halted on the 25th while the Elbe army came up to Gabel and Kunnersdorf, having marched thirty-five miles in five days.

The Crown-prince, on receiving the order of June 22nd, continued the westward movement of his army, so that his three leading corps would be ready to move on the 27th through the mountain passes leading into Bohemia, the VIth corps meanwhile being sent to Glatz to make a demonstration to the south, after which it was to follow the Vth. On the evening of the 26th, the Ist corps had its divisions at Liebau and Schomberg, within a short march of Trautenau; the Vth on the road from Glatz to Skalitz had pushed its vanguard to Nachod, a couple of miles from Wysokow, where the road emerges from the defile on to a plateau commanding the plain beyond. The Guard corps had its divisions at Dittersbach and Politz on two roads, one of which passes near to Trautenau and the other within half a march of Skalitz. Thus either wing corps could, in case of need, count upon the help of a division of the Guard.

The Austrian Emperor and Mensdorff, who should have endeavoured to put off the breach with Prussia until Benedek could report himself ready, allowed Gablenz on June 5th to raise the thorny question in Holstein. On that day the Emperor sent his adjutant Colonel Beck to ask Benedek to take measures for resisting a Prussian attack. Krismanič

replied that it was 'possible only if our own most vital interests are sacrificed.'

Benedek could trust himself on the battlefield where he could see with his own eyes; but for the large movements of the army he relied on Krismanič, who by his instructions on the 8th and 9th of June prepared orders for the event of the forward march of the army. By this time, the original positions of the several Prussian corps and the subsequent movements which they had begun had been correctly reported to Olmütz, except those of the Guard corps, which were not known. These data pointed to an invasion of Bohemia from Görlitz and Landeshut by Reichenberg and Trautenau. In his plan of operations, drawn up in April, Krismanič had considered the event of the Prussians adopting this course, and had proposed to meet it by marching the army to Chrudim near Pardubitz. But the orders he now drew up were for a march, not to Chrudim but to Josefstadt, a long day's march further to the north.

In 1778, the Emperor Joseph II had had his army on a high steep ridge between Königinhof on the Elbe and Josefstadt, looking north-west across the Elbe, which flows at its foot, and here awaited Frederick the Great, whose army came out of the defile at Nachod, a day's march away; while a second Austrian army under Daun lay on the Iser, to confront Prince Henry of Prussia, who was coming through the defiles of the Lusatian mountains. On that occasion, there was no battle; for the Prussians did not attack. Krismanič had a fancy for the way in which these two Austrian armies had been posted. In April, he had thought that 'in favourable circumstances,' which however he considered improbable, the position at Königinhof would be suitable for the opening of an Austrian offensive by way of Trautenau and Reichenberg. This position was the destination of the march for which he now drafted the arrangements.

The army was to march by three parallel roads—on the right, four army corps, one behind another, with a cavalry division at the head and another in the rear; in the centre, the two corps which were at and behind Brünn, followed by a cavalry division; on the left, a cavalry division and the reserve artillery. After it had fully started, the army would be four marches from front to rear. Even if the front should be halted, the rear corps could not come up with it till the fourth day. Thirteen days from the start would be required to bring the entire army into the new position.

It is difficult to understand how Krismanič could have proposed, or Benedek accepted, this scheme. The Prussian First army, of 100,000 men, was known to be about Görlitz and the Second, of 54,000, near Landeshut; they were therefore, each of them, nearer to Josefstadt than was the Austrian army. How could the Austrians expect to be there before the Prussians? The explanation seems to be that war was not yet declared, and that the Prussians must remain behind their frontier until it began. Yet the Emperor's message had shown that, on the 5th, he thought war might begin at any time.

On June 15th, Benedek was informed of the Prussian *ultimatum* to Saxony. He had also heard of the march of the Vth and VIth Prussian corps towards the Neisse, which might portend an advance in the direction of Olmütz. Orders were, therefore, prepared for concentrating the army near that fortress. On the 16th the Emperor telegraphed that events in Germany made it urgent that the operations should begin, whereupon Benedek issued the orders for closing up towards Olmütz. But, on the 17th, he was assured from Vienna that 'the main body of the enemy's army still remained nearer to the Elbe, and that the movement of the Prussian corps to the Neisse could only be a demonstration.' He then issued the previously prepared orders

for the march to the position at Königinhof-Josefstadt. Instructions had already been given for the Ist corps and the Ist cavalry division to await the Saxons at Jungbunzlau and then to march with them to join the main army near Josefstadt. These were now confirmed, with the addition that there was to be no more resistance to a Prussian attack than was needed to ensure a junction with the Saxon forces.

On the 18th Benedek learned from Vienna that the Bavarian army would not join him in Bohemia. On the 20th he received important fresh news concerning the Prussian forces. Hitherto, he had believed the Second army, commanded by the Crown-prince of Prussia, to consist only of the Vth and VIth corps, of whose march to the Neisse he knew. But intercepted copies of telegrams passing between the Prussian commanders now revealed that the Prussian Guard, a cavalry division and the Ist corps formed part of the Crown-prince's army; that they were marching back from the Neisse towards Waldenburg and Landeshut; that the ultimate destination of the Ist corps was Hirschberg, and that the commander of the First army at Görlitz was anxiously awaiting its arrival at Hirschberg, in order to begin his operations. This information confirmed the view that the march of the Vth and VIth corps to the Neisse had been a mere demonstration, and made it probable that part at least of the Second army would shortly enter the passes leading to Trautenau and Nachod. On learning this, Benedek issued revised orders for the later stages of the march, which were slightly accelerated. The leading corps was now due at Josefstadt on the 25th, the rear corps not till the 29th. Yet the Prussian Elbe army had reached Dresden on the 20th, and Dresden was within ten days' march of Josefstadt. The orders for the Ist and Saxon corps were now changed. Instead of marching off, so soon as their junction had been effected

to join the main army, they were to hold the position of Jungbunzlau and Münchengrätz and not to fall back towards the main army, unless compelled by superior forces. The Crown-prince of Saxony was to take command of the two corps and their two cavalry divisions.

On the 22nd, Benedek moved his headquarters to Böhmisch-Trübau, where he could conveniently supervise the march of his army, inspecting the corps as they passed. His heart was with the troops and here he was in his element. But a commander's place is at the head of his army, and his thoughts should be of the enemy's doings and the future.

On the 21st, the Prussians handed in a declaration of war to the Austrian outposts[1], and that afternoon the troops of the Elbe and First armies crossed the Austrian frontier. These events completely changed Benedek's situation, making it certain that the Austrian army could not be collected as a whole in the position to which it was marching, before at least one of the Prussian armies could be within reach of that position. Benedek, however, remained at Böhmisch-Trübau until after his last army corps had gone by, and then, on the morning of the 26th, went by train to Josefstadt.

The position in the whole theatre of war as it now dawned on him was this. In the west, the First Prussian army, 100,000 strong, had entered Reichenberg the day before, and must now be approaching Turnau. The Elbe army of 50,000 must be close beside the First on its right. The Crown-prince of Saxony, with 60,000 men, could neither stop nor long delay these greatly superior forces; and his right wing at Turnau, of cavalry only, was all that lay in the direct line of advance of the First Prussian army. Reports showed that the Second Prussian army might next day emerge from the passes on the line Trautenau-Nachod. Of the long columns of the main Austrian army,

[1] *Oesterreichs Kämpfe im Jahre 1866*, vol. III, p. 37, note.

that on the right would by evening have its leading corps, the IVth, at Salnei behind Königinhof and the next under Gablenz, late Governor of Holstein, at Schurz near Josefstadt. The other two were not yet up. The VIth, under General von Ramming, would be that night at Opocno, nine miles behind Josefstadt, when the IInd would reach Senftenberg, more than two marches distant. The two corps of the centre column would, in the course of the day, reach Königgrätz and Tynist. One cavalry division was already at Skalitz; but the other three were more than forty miles behind.

The situation was critical, for the Austrian army was dispersed and the enemy at hand. But Benedek now discovered the incompatibility between his own soldierly instinct and the ideas of Krismanič, upon whose superior knowledge his blind faith had been reposing. Benedek would have thrown the whole force at his disposal—on the 27th, three army corps and, on the 28th, two more—against the nearest enemy, the Crown-prince of Prussia. But Krismanič thought that the main army should be sent against the Prussian main army, that of Prince Frederick Charles. How this was possible is not clear. Apparently, he would have placed two or three corps in the position Josefstadt-Königinhof expecting them by sitting still to paralyse the Second Prussian army, while the remaining Austrian army corps came up, according to programme, into their positions, rested and then set off in a westerly direction, where they were to pick up the Ist corps and the Saxons and attack the First Prussian army.

Benedek mistrusted his instinct, while Krismanič was quite sure of himself. The result was a half-measure. Two corps were sent against the Crown-prince of Prussia, while the rest were to continue the prearranged march. Gablenz was ordered to Trautenau and Ramming towards Nachod. The orders sent off at 8 p.m. reached Gablenz,

who was at Schurz, close to Josefstadt, in good time. He suggested, but in vain, that troops should be sent also to the position in front of Eipel, where the centre defile opens, since otherwise he might be attacked in flank.

Gablenz was at Trautenau an hour before the Prussians and, after a hard fight which lasted all day, found himself master of the field; so that General Bonin, commanding the Ist Prussian corps, retreated at night through the pass to his starting-point of the morning. But the needle-gun had taken its toll. Gablenz had lost 4600 men, and his troops were worn out with fighting. He reported this and repeated his anxiety about his flank.

Ramming, nine miles away from Benedek's headquarters at Josefstadt, did not receive his orders till half past one in the morning and they did not clearly explain the purpose. He was told to put his corps in position at Skalitz, four miles from the exit from the pass, with an advance-guard towards Nachod, which is within the pass. When the brigade sent by him towards Nachod approached the ridge that blocks the pass, it found the advance-guard of the Prussian Vth corps already there, in an extraordinarily strong position. The Austrian brigadier attacked, relying, as the Austrian army had been taught to do, upon massive columns and the bayonet. It was mown down by the needle-gun. Ramming lost no time in coming from Skalitz to its help, and repeated his attacks again and again. He had all but taken the position and used up two more brigades, when the Prussian main body came into action and restored the fight. Ramming renewed the attack with his last brigade; but it was beaten off. He fell back to Skalitz, having lost 5400 men, and had to report that his corps would not be fit to fight next day.

During the 27th, the combination of two incompatible courses was continued. Benedek sent a fresh corps to Skalitz to relieve Ramming, and a second to support it.

Troops were ordered towards Eipel, to cover the exposed flank of Gablenz. But, at the same time, orders were prepared for a march on the 29th towards the Iser. By the morning of the 28th, Krismanič, full of self-confidence, had gained the ascendant. The Crown-prince of Saxony was ordered to fall back to Gitschin and told to expect Benedek there on the 30th. Only two corps were to be left to face the Prussian Second army, and the rest to start for Gitschin on the 29th. Gablenz was to fall back to Praussnitz opposite Eipel, without being supported by other troops; and two of the three corps at Skalitz were to be withdrawn. After this had been settled, Benedek and his staff rode off to Skalitz, where at 11 they found the Archduke Leopold, whose VIIIth corps had already relieved Ramming and was drawn up for battle. Its guns were replying to Prussian guns, which lay to the north of yesterday's battlefield. It was just possible that the Prussians were moving away towards support further north. 'There must be no serious action here,' said Benedek. 'I have other plans; my mind is made up, and I shall hold to my purpose.' Krismanič dictated orders to the effect that, if not attacked by two o'clock, Archduke Leopold and Ramming were to move back across the Elbe, leaving the IVth corps only to assist Gablenz against the Crown-prince. Benedek, hereupon, himself ordered Archduke Leopold to move off his corps immediately, and then rode back with his staff to Josefstadt.

To Josefstadt came word from the Crown-prince of Saxony that he was retreating from the Iser towards Gitschin, but no word from Gablenz, though there was a message from Königinhof that his supply train had returned. The long-prepared orders for the march towards Gitschin were sent off about six o'clock to the several army corps. It was then that news of disaster arrived from Skalitz and from Praussnitz.

Benedek had hardly left Skalitz and Archduke Leopold

had not yet issued the order for retreat, which he was no doubt reluctant to give, when the Prussians opened their attack. The position was an open gentle slope with broken wooded country in front and a swollen and therefore unfordable river behind. In a wood in front of the left brigade, an Austrian battalion had been posted. It was attacked by superior forces; and the brigade, without orders, moved forward to support it into the bad ground, abandoning its good position. It was driven back, and the next brigade, in turn, left the position to give assistance. Meanwhile, a whole Prussian division was moving down from the north-east against the thus disordered flank. The Archduke now ordered a retreat, which had become difficult and was made possible only by the coolness and courage of the artillery which covered it. When the Archduke collected his corps that night behind the Elbe, 5000 men, a quarter of its strength, were missing.

Gablenz, on receiving the order to fall back to Praussnitz, had set his brigades in movement in that direction, but was attacked while on the march by the Guard corps from Eipel. He at once sent orders to his distant brigades to retreat to the Elbe, while, with the one in hand, at Burkersdorf, he covered the withdrawal of his waggon train, and then himself retreated to Neuschloss. But one of his brigades, which had not received his order, had been caught between the two divisions of the Prussian Guard and surrounded, so that only a few stragglers escaped.

The plan of a march to Gitschin was now wrecked, and Benedek's faith in Krismanič shattered. Next day, the 29th, he wrote to the Crown-prince of Saxony to say that the march to meet him was abandoned, and that he must continue his retreat to the main army without risking serious engagements. Six corps were this day collected in the position Königinhof-Josefstadt, to oppose the Prussian Second army. But the IVth corps, left for the time as

a rearguard at Schweinschädel, was attacked and driven back, with a loss of 1500 men, by the Prussian Vth corps. Gablenz had to march his corps from Neuschloss down the Elbe to his new post on the plateau behind Königinhof. The Prussian Guard at Praussnitz was nearer than he was to that place, to which he marched by the south bank of the Elbe. But the road, just before Königinhof, crosses the river into that town, which is on the north bank, and thence recrosses it. He posted troops on the north side of the town to cover the march through it, but his rear brigade was still in the streets when the Prussian advance-guard came up to the attack. The brigade made good its way, but the protecting force was eventually driven back across the river, with a loss of 600 men; and the Prussians occupied Königinhof.

Benedek had now his six corps together. But four of them had been roughly handled, and the men had learned to dread the needle-gun, while the generals had lost confidence in the columns and bayonet charges, for which alone the troops had been prepared. Henikstein had not succeeded in securing that punctuality in the delivery of messages to which Benedek had rightly attached so much importance. The lack of dispatch had been unfortunate for Ramming at Nachod, and was fatal to the army of the Crown-prince of Saxony.

Early in June, arrangements had been made that, in case of a Prussian invasion of Saxony, the Crown-prince should take the Saxon army, 20,000 men, forming an army corps, and 2000 horse, forming a cavalry division, to join the Austrians in Bohemia, his retreat being covered by Count Clam-Gallas (a great nobleman who, however, had not distinguished himself in 1859), with the Ist Austrian army corps, 33,000 men in five brigades, and the 1st cavalry division, 4500 horse, under Freiherr L. von Edelsheim, a good leader. So soon as the junction had been effected,

the whole force was to join the main army near Josefstadt. This arrangement was confirmed by Benedek's orders of June 17th for the march of his army from Olmütz to Josefstadt. Thereupon, the Crown-prince and Clam-Gallas arranged, with Benedek's approval, to move the Saxon army, when it had crossed the frontier on the 20th, by railway from Lobositz to Prelautsch, whence it could march to Chlumetz. But, on the 22nd, when half the troops had reached Chlumetz and half were still at Lobositz, came Benedek's new order of the 20th, instructing the Crown-prince and Clam-Gallas to collect all their troops at Jungbunzlau and Münchengrätz, and not to retire towards the main army, unless driven back by superior force, in which case they were to make for Miletin. They then arranged for the two halves of the Saxon army and the Austrian brigade, which had met it at Teplitz, to march from where they stood to Jungbunzlau. The distances were long, and the troops reached Jungbunzlau, tired out, on the 25th. The Crown-prince, who arrived there on the 24th, received a telegram instructing him to take command of both corps, but to consult Clam-Gallas, and, on the 25th, a letter to say that his task was to resist a Prussian attack from the direction of Reichenberg and Gabel. At this time, Edelsheim was at Turnau, Clam-Gallas at Münchengrätz, and the Saxons between Münchengrätz and Jungbunzlau. The First Prussian army had entered Reichenberg, whence Edelsheim's cavalry posts had fallen back halfway to Turnau. The Elbe army was beyond Gabel, on the way towards Jungbunzlau. The Crown-prince of Saxony, a clear-headed commander, saw that Turnau was the critical point; for there the straight road from Reichenberg to Gitschin crosses the Iser. But his own troops were too much exhausted to stir, and Clam-Gallas saw no need for the movement.

Prince Frederick Charles, having crowded his army

round Reichenberg on the 25th, ordered the bulk of his troops to wait on the 26th for the Elbe army, of which on this day the advance-guard of the right column reached Hühnerwasser, nine miles from Münchengrätz. Here it attacked and drove out a large Austrian post, which suffered severely from the rapid fire of the needle-gun. Prince Frederick Charles, however, sent on one division, the 8th, to reconnoitre the defile of Liebenau. This led to a skirmish with Edelsheim's forward cavalry post, which retired; whereupon, Edelsheim fell back from Turnau towards Münchengrätz, and Frederick Charles allowed two other divisions to go forward. They entered Eisenbrod and Turnau, while the 8th division, pushing on, came at nightfall with its advance-guard on an Austrian post holding the bridge of Podol. There was a sharp fight in the dark, in which the needle-gun at short range proved murderous. The Austrians had to fall back, and the Prussians secured the bridge.

Prince Frederick Charles now knew that he was opposed by only two army corps, instead of three as he had imagined; and his left wing at Eisenbrod and Turnau were within a march of his destination, Gitschin. But he decided to attack at Münchengrätz the enemy whom he had found there, and, as the position was strong, devoted the 27th to elaborate arrangements for attacking on the 28th, though an advance to Gitschin would have turned the position and cut off the Crown-prince of Saxony from the main army. To prevent this, the Crown-prince retreated towards Gitschin on the 28th, and the great attack of Prince Frederick Charles hit nothing but the Austrian rearguard. This body would not have been hurt except for delay in recalling its outposts, which it bravely stayed to defend, losing 900 killed and wounded and as many prisoners.

Edelsheim's and part of Clam's corps reached Gitschin on the 28th, the remainder on the morning of the 29th.

The Saxons had further to march, and very bad roads; and, by the afternoon of the 29th their two divisions were halted to rest at villages four and five miles south-west and south of Gitschin.

Moltke was disappointed with the slow progress of Prince Frederick Charles, upon whom the need for a rapid advance had been impressed. Yet the Prince telegraphed to Berlin on the 28th for permission to halt and rest next day. Most of his troops had never been engaged, and he had fought no battle; his army had only advanced six miles a day. He had crowded it so closely that the troops could not be fed and could hardly be moved, and the men were plundering the villages, where however they found nothing to eat. Moltke replied that the Prince must push on, and next morning the King telegraphed ordering a speedier advance and Moltke repeated his instructions. On the 29th, therefore, the Prince put four of his divisions on roads towards the west and sent the Elbe army to attack the Saxons, whom he imagined to be still at Jungbunzlau.

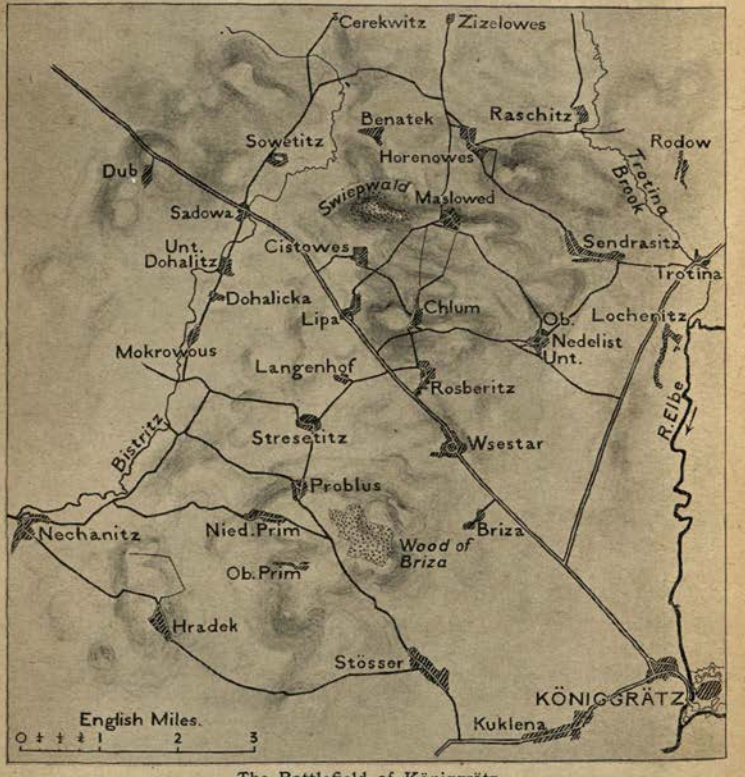
The Crown-prince of Saxony and Clam-Gallas had had Benedek's orders of the 28th announcing his intended start for Gitschin, where they expected one of his corps or part of it on the 29th. When therefore, just before four o'clock, their cavalry reported Prussians approaching on the road from Turnau, they determined to stand and fight to cover Gitschin, since they were expecting Benedek to join them there.

The two roads from Turnau and from Münchengrätz are separated, until within a couple of miles of Gitschin, by a rocky ridge which conceals the one from the other. Clam-Gallas had two brigades across the Münchengrätz road and three across that from Turnau, where there was a gap in his centre, to be filled up by a Saxon brigade. The Prussian division on this road was able, while its right attacked the Austrian left, to move its main body unseen, so as to strike the Austrian right and centre; and this

movement had made some progress, when the Saxon brigade came up just in time to check it. There was a pause during which each side prepared for a fresh effort. But at this moment, 7.15 p.m., the Crown-prince of Saxony received Benedek's letter written at eight that morning, announcing the abandonment of his own westward march, and instructing the Crown-prince to continue his retreat, without allowing himself to be drawn into a serious action, to the position where the rest of the army was now collected, The young nobleman who carried the letter had lunched and spent the afternoon at a country house, where he had been told that the Crown-prince of Saxony was expected. At the same moment came a message from the commander on the other road, stating that he was attacked by four times his own strength. The Crown-prince and Clam-Gallas decided to break off the engagement and retire to join Benedek. Just as the orders had reached the troops and the backward movement begun, the Prussians renewed their attack, which had to be withstood in difficult conditions. The troops were however withdrawn, and most of them had passed through Gitschin, when in the darkness Prussian troops from various directions approached the town. Some were beaten off, but one party made its way through an unguarded entrance and reached the market-place, just as Clam-Gallas was dictating the directions for further retreat. He had to escape as well as he could, and the orders never reached his troops. They had lost heavily in the action, and in the darkness and confusion no control was practicable. The Saxons made their way to Smidar, joined by some of the Austrians, of whom the bulk went to Horitz. Here they were disturbed by Prussian cavalry and continued their retreat, some to Miletin, others on to Königgrätz, arriving next morning exhausted and demoralised.

For Benedek this was a crushing blow. It was impossible

to stand and fight where he was, for Prince Frederick Charles was only a march from his now unguarded flank



The Battlefield of Königgrätz

and rear. In the afternoon, he issued orders for a retreat towards Königgrätz, the troops to bivouac in the space

between the Elbe and the Bistritz at Sadowa. Then he wrote a note to his wife in which he said: 'At the (Marshals') conference I told the Emperor frankly, between ourselves, that, at his wish, I was ready to sacrifice to him my civil and military honour—and that has now happened.' Then he telegraphed to Count Crenneville, the Emperor's chief adjutant: '*Débâcle* of Ist and Saxon army corps obliges me to retreat toward Königgrätz.'

The retreat began at one in the morning of July 1st. Benedek set out soon after, and, as he passed the troops, saw abundant signs of their depressed condition. At eleven, he reached Königgrätz, where he was met by Colonel Beck, the Emperor's adjutant, and received a telegram from the Emperor expressing confidence in his leadership. Beck suggested a further retreat to Pardubitz, and Henikstein and Krismanič agreed. Benedek privately told Beck that he had found Krismanič incompetent. At 11.30, he telegraphed to the Emperor: 'Beseech your Majesty to make peace at any price. Catastrophe for army inevitable.' In the afternoon he rode round the bivouacs and found the troops in better spirits. The Emperor's reply to his telegram was: 'Impossible to make peace. If retreat necessary, start at once. Has there been a battle?' In the evening, Benedek decided to keep the army next day where it was. He received the Emperor's orders to send home Henikstein, Krismanič and Clam-Gallas, and to appoint a chief of the staff in whom he had confidence.

On the morning of the 2nd, Benedek telegraphed to the Emperor: 'The army stays to-morrow in its position at Königgrätz; a day's rest and sufficient food have had a good effect. Hope not to need to retreat further.' The question 'has there been a battle?' made him think that the Emperor wished him to stand and fight; and this, perhaps against his better judgment, he determined to do.

The country through which he had passed during the retreat of July 1st seemed favourable ground. The hilly country between the Elbe and the Bistritz was everywhere suitable for the movement of troops and abounded in strong positions. The Bistritz, swollen by recent heavy rains, could be crossed only at the bridges and would offer a serious obstacle to the armies of Prince Frederick Charles. Riding from the north, Benedek had seen, from Zizelowes, the hill, crowned by two great lime-trees, that towers 200 feet above the villages of Horenowes and Raschitz and bars half the space between the Trotina brook and the Bistritz. Further back lay the ridge which bars the other half, running out westwards from behind Horenowes to the high wooded promontory of the Swiepwald. He had ascended this ridge to Maslowed and thence crossed the gentle depression that separates it from the massive hill of Chlum, with that village nestling on its northern shoulder and the village of Lipa lying on its western slope, a hundred feet below the summit and a hundred feet above the Bistritz at Sadowa, a mile and a half away. He had noticed how the ground falls away in shallow troughs from the lime-trees overlooking Horenowes to Sendrasitz and from Maslowed and Chlum to Nedelist. Later in the same day, he had reconnoitred the country south of Chlum, following the low crest-line from Lipa to Stresetitz that parts the steep western slope towards the Bistritz from the gentler eastern declivity towards Wsestar and the flat ground towards Königgrätz. He had observed the high plateau which bears on its western rim the villages of Problus, Nieder- and Ober-Prim, with a clear flat space behind them bordered by the wood of Briza.

As the reports from the outposts came in during the afternoon it became plain that the Prussian Elbe and First armies were advancing, while the Second army gave no sign of movement. Late at night on July 2nd, Benedek issued

dispositions for the army in case it should be attacked next day.

On June 29th, the Hanoverian army capitulated, and, on the 30th, King William and his staff went by train from Berlin to Reichenberg. On the way, Moltke telegraphed to the Second army that it was to remain on the north bank of the Elbe, its right ready to join on through Königinhof to the left of the First army, which was to advance towards Königgrätz without stopping. The Elbe army was to attack any bodies of the enemy on the right flank of the First army and drive them away from the enemy's main body. Next day, while the King went to Sichrow, Moltke moved on to Gitschin, where he received reports from both armies. He was disappointed to find that neither Prussian commander knew where the Austrian army was, and that the First army was crowded behind Horitz on a front extending only three miles to right and to left, while the Elbe army was massed behind Smidar. Late at night, he wrote an order, dated July 2nd, pointing out that the first thing was to find the enemy's army. The Elbe army must move to its right to Chlumetz and the First army extend its front from Horitz to Neu-Bydschow, sending a detachment towards Sadowa to reconnoitre the line of the Elbe between the fortresses. If there were large bodies of the enemy in front of that line, they were to be attacked at once with superior forces. The Ist corps was to advance through Miletin, while the rest of the Second army was to remain on the left bank of the Elbe and to reconnoitre southwards on that bank. Both armies were allowed to rest on the 2nd, and the above-mentioned orders were to be carried out on the 3rd.

During the 2nd Blumenthal went to Gitschin to try to persuade Moltke that the Second army ought to cross the Elbe to unite with the First; but Moltke would not agree to this. He was prepared to find the Austrians

behind the Elbe between the two fortresses, and might wish to attack their right with the Second army. Blumenthal went back to the Crown-prince at Königinhof.

Soon after noon the King arrived at Gitschin, where he was met by Prince Frederick Charles, who returned in the evening to his headquarters at Kamenitz. There he learned that the bivouacs of three Austrian army corps had been observed along the Bistritz near Sadowa. Moltke's orders of the 2nd required an attack upon them; and at 9 p.m. Prince Frederick Charles issued orders for the troops of the First army to advance at dawn on both sides of the Königgrätz road, one division to Cerekwitz, and for the Elbe army to march to Nechanitz. He also wrote to ask the Crown-prince to send one or more corps from Königinhof on the right bank of the Elbe towards Josefstadt, to protect his flank.

Late that night General von Voigts-Rhetz brought a copy of these orders and the information upon which they were based to the King at Gitschin. Moltke saw that it was too late to stop the attack ordered and, with the King's approval, wrote to ask the Crown-prince to set off as soon as possible with his whole army in the direction of the Austrian right flank. The Crown-prince had wished to reply to Prince Frederick Charles that he would go to his help with his whole army; but Blumenthal had objected that this would be contrary to the orders already received not to cross the Elbe. Moltke's letter settled the question, and orders were sent to all the corps of the Second army to start as soon as possible.

During the early hours of July 3rd the Austrian troops moved into their places. The Crown-prince of Saxony took position at Problus and Nieder-Prim, with the Austrian VIIIth corps to support him. On his right from Stresetitz to the heights of Lipa and Chlum were the Xth and IIIrd corps, their artillery posted so as to sweep

the slope before them down to the villages by the Bistritz. Behind them, in reserve, were the Ist and VIth corps, the reserve artillery and two cavalry divisions. The right wing was to be formed by the IVth corps, between Chlum and Nedelist, and the IInd, from Nedelist to the Elbe. This line, assigned to the right wing, followed no strong natural feature; the view to the front and the field of fire which it offered were alike restricted. When Count Festetics, commanding the IVth corps, reached the place, he changed position to the left, bringing his right to Maslowed. Count Thun, commanding the IInd corps, followed suit, so that his corps stood on the line from Maslowed to Horenowes.

By eight o'clock the Prussian First army under Prince Frederick Charles had five of its six divisions, 60,000 men, approaching the Bistritz between Mokrowous and Sowetitz, while the remaining division, 13,000 men under General von Fransecky, was advancing from Cerekwitz towards Benatek. At eight, King William joined the Prince on the hill at Dub and gave the word to advance, while Moltke, who had received the Crown-prince's reply that he would come with his whole army, sent a message to Herwarth telling him to push on with the Elbe army against the left flank of the Austro-Saxons. Three divisions of the First army crossed the Bistritz and soon drove back the Austrian infantry, which had come forward from its proper position to the villages by the stream. As these troops withdrew, they unmasked the fire of 160 Austrian guns in line from Lipa towards Stresetitz. The Prussian divisions could neither advance under this fire nor retire across the swollen brook. The shells played havoc with their masses, which stood there making attempts to rush forward. All these broke down, until, after midday, Prince Frederick Charles ordered his last two divisions to cross the brook and go forward. Moltke, who by this time had

a message that the Crown-prince was at Zizelowes, caused the order to attack to be revoked and sent a note to Herwarth to report the approach of the Second army and to urge him to press his movement against the enemy's left flank.

Fransecky, on reaching Benatek, sent his advance-guard towards the Swiepwald, from which the Austrian outposts had not yet been withdrawn into their battle position. They fell back, fighting, through the wood towards Cistowes, where there was a brigade which supported them. The Prussians were driven back to the wood, where they in turn received supports. Further Austrian and Prussian troops were thrown into the fight, until, on the Prussian side, Fransecky's whole division and part of another were engaged. General Festetics was wounded, and his successor Count Mollinary, about 11.30, delivered an attack with all the troops of his own corps and half of those of the IInd. The Prussians were thrown out of the wood, and Mollinary was eager to push on and attack the left flank of Prince Frederick Charles. But Benedek, just before the attack, had received a telegram from Josefstadt which warned him that the Prussian Second army was marching towards the field. He ordered Mollinary and Thun to withdraw their corps to the position at first assigned to them on the line from Chlum to Nedelist and the Elbe. The order was repeated in the moment of Mollinary's success, but was difficult of execution. Troops recalled in the flush of a successful attack are necessarily disheartened. The troops had been hotly engaged, and it was doubtful whether, once recalled, they would be fit for another hard fight. It was past noon when the retrograde movement began, and nearly two o'clock when it was finished. The two brigades of the IInd corps reached Nedelist exhausted and continued their retreat across the Elbe, so that at two o'clock only fragments of this corps

were on their proper ground. Of the IVth corps three brigades were collected by this time, and two of them deployed between Chlum and Nedelist, while the third stood near them in a rendezvous formation.

The Elbe army began to file across the bridge at Nechanitz towards nine in the morning. At noon, while its advance-guard was moving towards the Austro-Saxon position at Problus and Nieder-Prim, its leading division was beginning to advance from Hradek towards Ober-Prim. The Crown-prince of Saxony made a counter-attack towards Hradek; but it broke down so soon as the Austrian troops covering and supporting it on the left came in contact with the Prussian troops. These Austrians belonged to the corps which, six days before, had suffered so terribly at Skalitz. They could not face the needle-gun. The attempted counter-attack was renewed with more troops, but again failed in just the same way, leaving the Prussians masters of Ober-Prim and able to attack from the south the position at Problus, which Herwarth's next division was deploying to attack from the north. The Crown-prince of Saxony left a mere rearguard in Problus, while he posted his troops in the west edge of the wood of Briza. The Prussians attacked and took Problus from the north, repulsed a counterstroke made by a brigade from the Austrian great reserve, and, about three o'clock, delivered their attack on the wood of Briza. Again, the Austrians, holding the southern part of the wood, could not stand, and the Saxons had to fall back. By four o'clock, they were in full retreat, and the Prussian Elbe army was holding the wood of Briza.

While Mollinary and Thun had been reluctantly withdrawing their disappointed troops from the Swiepwald, the Second Prussian army was deploying its three leading divisions at Zizelowes, Raschitz and Rodow. While the Austrians were moving across the hollow plateau towards

Nedelist, these Prussian divisions were swarming up the heights between Horenowes and Trotina. Forty-eight Austrian guns of the IInd corps, on the lime-tree height, had resisted their approach, but 78 Prussian guns had replied; the Austrian batteries ran out of ammunition and retired as the Prussian infantry approached. At two o'clock, the Prussians were formed on the line Maslowed-Sendrasitz-Trotina, more than half-hidden by the ground. Then they went forward. In front of the Austrian infantry between Chlum and Nedelist were a couple of batteries entrenched; behind it was a line of 120 guns from the artillery reserve, which engaged the guns of the Prussian Guard at Maslowed. The Prussian infantry had moved forward and disappeared into a hollow. Suddenly, a hail of bullets, coming out of the standing corn, swept down the gunners of the two Austrian batteries, and immediately afterwards the Prussian infantry was upon them. There was a rush to the rear, and, as the fugitives, accompanied by flights of bullets, came upon the front Austrian brigade, its startled men turned and fled, carrying along the brigade behind them and bringing confusion into the line of guns, which had to be withdrawn. The Prussian right came up to the east side of Chlum, of which the defenders were on the west side. The Prussians were masters of the village before they could be met. The needle-guns poured bullets into the Austrian brigade waiting by the south end of the place; it was shaken and went back. Meanwhile, the divisions of the Prussian VIth corps were entering Nedelist and Lochenitz, where the fragments of Thun's corps, after he with his two worn-out brigades had departed, could not stop them.

From Benedek's post of observation above Lipa nothing of all this could be seen. At a quarter to three, he was intent on the action in front of him, when a staff-officer rode up and told him that the Prussians were in Chlum.

'Don't be silly,' said Benedek. But the officer asserted that it was the fact, and Benedek rode with his staff towards Chlum. They were met by bullets, and several of them fell. The brigades nearest at hand were at once ordered to retake the village, but, first one and then the other, were shattered in the attempt. The battle was lost and could not be restored, but in the stress of defeat Benedek showed himself a leader.

His front line from Lipa to Stresetitz, taken in flank at both ends by the Second and Elbe armies, was retiring, covered by the artillery. To gain time, Benedek threw in his reserves. He ordered the VIth corps to retake Chlum. It failed against Chlum, but drove the Prussians out of Rosberitz. Then he sent the Ist corps against Chlum. The attack was bravely made; but in twenty minutes the corps was retreating leaving 10,000 men on the ground. The whole of the Austrian infantry was streaming away towards Königgrätz; and, as the artillery line withdrew, the Prussian First army advanced, preceded by masses of cavalry. The Austrian cavalry, hitherto in reserve, came forward and charged the Prussians, driving them back through their infantry. When the Prussian bullets forced the Austrian cavalry to move off the ground, its retirement disclosed behind it 200 Austrian guns in a line stretching from Stösser on the left to a mile or more beyond the Königgrätz high road. Before that line of guns the Prussians halted.

Moltke was balked of his prey. He had hoped that the Elbe army would have met the VIth corps and completed the circle round the Austrians before they could escape. Benedek had, indeed, been defeated; his army had lost 40,000 men in the battle. But he had saved it from capture; three-fifths of it, in fair order, had reached the space between the protecting artillery and the Elbe.

In the exertions and fierce fighting at the height of the battle no orders for regulating the retreat could be

written, and the messages sent to the corps-commanders were not all delivered. The order to avoid the fortress of Königgrätz had not been rescinded. The fortress had been strengthened by flooding the country, so that the Elbe could only be crossed on the roads running on dams through the inundation. Those through the fortress were closed, and all were completely obstructed by the retreating waggons of the army. There was no outlet for the hundred-thousand men crowded between the Elbe and the artillery which kept off the enemy. Some of the troops escaped to the south. Some had crossed the Elbe above Königgrätz before the Prussians had reached it. But the great crowded mass fell into confusion. 'This,' says the Austrian official historian, 'did more to ruin the army than the battle.' Late at night, the fortress opened its gates, and next morning, at Holitz, Benedek organised the retreat towards Olmütz.

There was no pursuit. The Prussian armies coming on to the centre of the battlefield from three directions had their troops intermingled. All were tired out. Moltke was exhausted to fever-point, and had to be taken in a carriage to Gitschin to sleep. The only order issued was for a rest next day. The Prussian commanders had no idea of the completeness of their victory, for they had seen the Austrian army retire in good order. But, next day, when Gablenz came to ask for a truce, which was refused, his tone and bearing showed that the Austrians were crushed. On the 5th, the Second army marched to Pardubitz, the First to Prelautsch, and the Elbe army towards Prague, which one of its divisions occupied on the 8th of July. On the 6th, the Second army was directed towards Olmütz, the First and Elbe armies towards Vienna.

Benedek, by the 11th, had seven of his corps back at Olmütz, and one was arriving by railway at Vienna. On that day the Emperor gave the command-in-chief of

all his armies to Archduke Albrecht, who ordered two of his corps from Italy to Vienna, whither Benedek on the 13th was told to take his whole army. On the 18th Benedek sent off by railway the IIIrd corps, and next day half of the Saxon corps, setting the remainder on the roads down the valley of the March. But, on the 15th, the Second Prussian army, now close to Olmütz and marching southward by a road a day's march west of the town, sent forward part of a cavalry division with a few infantry to Tobitschau. It struck on the head of the last Austrian army corps leaving Olmütz, and caused it to halt. On the same day, troops pushed forward from the First army cut the railway line at Göding. Benedek now turned his columns from the March through the Carpathians to move on Pressburg by the valley of the Waag. The Prussian Second army marched south to join the First, and Moltke directed the First and the Elbe armies towards the Danube between Pressburg and Vienna, pushing on a corps towards Pressburg, to which town Benedek too was hurrying his foremost corps. Negotiations had begun at Nikolsburg and a five days' armistice was probable. If Benedek should gain Pressburg, his army could there cross the Danube, to join the Archduke at Vienna. But, if the Prussians should reach Pressburg first, Benedek's army must go round by Komorn, and the Prussians, crossing the Danube at Pressburg, might prevent its reaching Vienna. The race which followed was hurrying on, when, on the 20th, an armistice was arranged, to begin at noon on the 22nd. By that morning, the Austrians had the greater part of an army corps in and about Pressburg, with an advance-guard at Blumenau, which was attacked by the Prussian General Fransecky. But, at noon, the action was still undecided, and the armistice found the Austrians in possession of Pressburg, where during the next few days Benedek's army crossed the Danube and joined the

Campaign in Southern Germany

Archduke, bringing up the total of his forces in and about Vienna to 275,000 men. If the Austrian Government had been at the head of a national state, this was the moment when popular feeling might have been roused to a resistance which the Prussian army would have found it most difficult to overcome. But the Emperor had been fighting only for his throne, the fear of losing which had misled him in the choice of a commander. The same fear now caused him to renounce the continuation of the struggle.

While the chief Prussian army was reaping the fruits of its great victory in Bohemia, the three divisions which in June had hunted down the Hanoverian army were engaged in overrunning southern Germany, where a short-sighted policy and a feeble strategy greatly facilitated their task. After the capitulation of the Hanoverian army on the 29th of June, Falckenstein collected and rearranged his army of 46,000 men for attack on the south-German states. On July 1st Beyer's division was at Gerstungen, Göben's at Eisenach and Manteuffel's at Grossenbehringen.

The Bavarian army, 45,000 men in four divisions, had moved north from Schweinfurt with the idea of meeting or helping the Hanoverians and on June 26th stood behind Neustadt on the Saale. The troops of Württemberg, Baden, Nassau and the grand-duchy of Hesse, with an Austrian brigade formed of the troops from the garrisons of Frankfort, Rastatt and Mainz, were gathering round Frankfort. They were to form the seventh Federal corps, consisting of 45,000 men, under Prince Alexander of Hesse, who was to follow the instructions of Prince Charles of Bavaria, commanding the Bavarian army and also Commander-in-chief of the German Federal forces, a retired field-marshal of 71—'too old,' as Hohenlohe concisely put it. On the 26th of June Prince Alexander had only 32,000 men, five brigades out of nine. On that day he went to

Schweinfurt to see Prince Charles. It was known that Falckenstein's forces were acting against the Hanoverians, who at this time were expected to hold out for some days. It was arranged that both armies should start on June 30th, Prince Alexander from Frankfort, by the roads skirting the western foot of the Vogelsgebirge, Prince Charles from Neustadt by Brückenau and Fulda, and should unite near Hersfeld on July 7th. On the 28th came an urgent appeal for aid from the Hanoverians, who had beaten the Prussians on the 27th. Prince Charles set out from Neustadt towards Eisenach; but, on the 30th, when his divisions stood along the Werra from Wasungen to Hildburghausen, he heard of the capitulation of the Hanoverians. On this day his headquarters were at Meiningen, and Prince Alexander's at Hungen, 65 miles distant. Hersfeld, the proposed point of junction, is 40 miles from Hungen, 32 from Meiningen and only 25 from Eisenach. The Prussians must arrive there first. The right move was for both armies to march to meet at Brückenau, three marches for each of them, and at least four for the Prussians. But Prince Charles was afraid that this would look like a retreat and proposed a junction in the direction of Fulda, about 25 miles march for each army. The Bavarian army could not hurry. On July 3rd it was still trailing into the valley of the Felda, its main body reaching Kaltennordheim, only ten miles from Meiningen, and the head of its right wing Dermbach. Prince Charles had by this time tardily decided that he had better turn southwards towards Brückenau, and on the morning of the 4th issued orders to that effect.

Falckenstein had set out on the 2nd for Hünfeld, and on the 3rd his left column under Göben brushed against the advance-guard of the Bavarian right and pushed it out of Dermbach. Moltke had instructed Falckenstein to attack the Bavarian army, and Göben, having found it,

was eager to do so. But Falckenstein, since Bismarck's telegram to him, had had Frankfort on the brain. He would not go out of his way to attack the Bavarians, and allowed Göben to deliver only a short stroke in order to clear the line of march towards Fulda. On the 4th, therefore, Göben attacked the nearest Bavarian troops at villages south and east of Dermbach. Both sides fought well, but, as each had orders to march away from the field, the armies parted without a real trial of strength.

Prince Alexander had turned, as requested, towards Fulda and was within a march of that place, when he learned that Falckenstein's army was approaching it, that Prince Charles proposed now to wait for him at Kissingen, and that the Austrian army had been defeated at Königgrätz. He decided to march back to Frankfort, in order to protect those of the south-German states whose troops he commanded; and by the 9th his army was back again in the region from which it had started ten days before.

When Falckenstein reached Fulda he halted for a day and telegraphed to Moltke for permission to march on Frankfort. Moltke replied that Falckenstein's business was to find and beat the Bavarian army. Thereupon, he set out from Fulda in the direction of Schweinfurt and on the 10th came across the Bavarian army scattered along the Saale from Neustadt to Hammelburg. Beyer defeated its left wing at Hammelburg, Göben its centre at Kissingen, and Manteuffel its right wing at Friedrichshall and Waldaschach. On the next day, Falckenstein was in pursuit towards Schweinfurt, but received a telegram from the King's headquarters in Bohemia, to the effect that in view of possible negotiations it was desirable to occupy as much territory north of the Main as possible. He, therefore, abandoned the chase of the shattered Bavarian army, and marched off towards Frankfort.

By this time, Alexander of Hesse had reflected that the

best defence of Frankfort and southern Germany would be to help the Bavarians to beat Falckenstein; so he turned his army in the direction of Würzburg and sent the Hessian brigade in advance to Aschaffenburg. The Hessians, pushing forward to guard the exits from the defiles of the Spessart, came, at Lauffach, upon Göben's advance-guard, which they attacked; but they were beaten off with heavy loss. By the next day, Alexander's Austrian brigade was posted at Aschaffenburg; but Göben struck it with his full strength and drove it across the Main. On the 10th, Falckenstein made his triumphal entry into the defenceless city of Frankfort, upon which he laid a heavy hand. The city was ordered to provide all his men with their rations, besides, every day, a pint of wine, a quart of beer and eight cigars apiece, and to furnish them in the next twenty-four hours with a year's pay (5¾ million florins—*c.* £480,000), besides a vast quantity of necessaries. The Frankfort Government had always been Austrian in its sympathies, and, in spite of Bismarck's circular stating that Prussia would regard any vote in favour of the motion of June 14th at the Diet as a declaration of war against her, had voted on the Austro-Bavarian side. Falckenstein had hardly made his entry into Frankfort, when King William, annoyed by his disobedience during the Hanoverian campaign, recalled him and appointed Manteuffel to succeed him in the command. Manteuffel immediately, by Bismarck's orders, increased the money-payment by the city of Frankfort to 25 million florins (£2,100,000)[1].

Prince Alexander had meantime, with the whole of his force, crossed the Main to the district between Darmstadt and Aschaffenburg and marched through the Odenwald

[1] Bismarck, however, subsequently agreed to deduct the money contribution as first fixed, from the second, and thus to lower this to 19 million florins (*c.* £1,580,000).

to join the Bavarians on the Tauber. It was arranged that the now united armies should proceed through the Spessart towards Frankfort, the Bavarians taking the road through Lohr, the Federal troops that through Miltenberg, towards Aschaffenburg. The Bavarians, therefore, moved into the loop of the Main between Würzburg and Lohr, while the Federal troops were starting from the Tauber towards Miltenberg. But Prince Alexander at once found himself confronted by Prussian columns, Manteuffel having immediately set out to follow him through the Odenwald. Prince Alexander, accordingly, fell back behind the Tauber to Grossrinderfeld, while Prince Charles ordered his scattered divisions to collect near Rossbrünn, the object being to bring the two armies within supporting distance of each other. But, on the 24th, Göben attacked Prince Alexander's rearguards at Werbach and Tauberbischofsheim, and drove them back with heavy loss. Next day, while Beyer and Flies pushed back two of the Bavarian divisions from Helmstadt towards Rossbrünn, Prince Alexander had again to retreat before Göben's attack on his rearguard at Gerchsheim. On the 26th, Prince Alexander's troops, demoralised, continued their retreat across the Main to Würzburg, while Beyer and Flies drove Prince Charles from Rossbrünn towards Hettstadt. Here he made a stand, covered by his artillery, and succeeded in withdrawing his army also across the Main. The two armies were now united, at Würzburg, behind the river, where they could not easily be attacked. Manteuffel contented himself with bombarding the Marienburg, and negotiations began, which were so managed from Nikolsburg as to delay the final armistice in southern Germany until August 2nd. The purpose of this was to give time to the Grand-duke of Mecklenburg-Schwerin, who had started from Leipzig on July 20th with an army corps of Prussian *Landwehr*, to

carry his invasion of Bavaria as far as Nürnberg, which he occupied on August 1st.

Custoza

The success of Prussia in 1866 was not due to superior numbers. The Prussian armies which invaded Bohemia had a total strength of 290,000 men, and the combined Austro-Saxon forces opposed to them of 260.000. The superiority

was, therefore, not quite 12 per cent. The peace negotiations had only just concluded when the veteran historian Jomini, in a review of the war, wrote: 'These astonishing successes were brought about by a combination of the general causes which influence the fate of empires, in the first rank of which we may, on this occasion, place the neglect of the principles of strategy by the one side and their application by the other.'

Prussia's success was made possible by the cooperation of King Victor Emmanuel, whose forces, though unfortunate both by land and sea, yet kept an Austrian army away from the northern theatre of war. He had formed two armies, one of 110,000 combatants under his own command on the Mincio between Lake Garda and the Po, the other of 70,000 combatants under General Cialdini near Ferrara. They were both to advance and unite near Treviso. Garibaldi, with 40,000 volunteers, collected at Como, was to invade Tyrol, his project for a landing in Dalmatia by way of support to an insurrection in Hungary having been rejected by La Marmora, the King's chief political and military adviser.

Archduke Albrecht kept his three army corps, 75,000 men, collected behind the Adige between Verona and Legnago, ready to strike whichever Italian army should move first. On June 23rd, the day on which Italy had notified that she would begin hostilities, the King's army crossed the Mincio at and above Monzambano. On that day, the Archduke marched his army through Verona and across the Adige and, on the 24th, continued the march into the hilly country to the south-east of Lake Garda, where it wheeled to the left and struck the flank of the Italian army advancing towards Villafranca. The Italian left wing was driven from the hills between Custoza and the Mincio; and the rest of the army, too much scattered to

help the left wing and paralysed for a long time by a charge of the Austrian cavalry near Villafranca, had to save itself by a hasty retreat across that river.

The victory of Custoza was complete. Its first result was the abandonment of Cialdini's attempt to cross the Po from Ferrara. But the news of the defeat at Königgrätz prevented the Archduke from pressing his advantage. On July 9th he sent away two of his army corps to Vienna, while the third fell back to the Isonzo, slowly followed by Cialdini. General Kuhn repulsed all the attempts of Garibaldi to invade Tyrol.

The Italian fleet, under Admiral Persano, attempted the reduction of the island of Lissa off the Dalmatian coast. On July 18th the forts of S. Giorgio were bombarded, and preparations made for landing troops. The bombardment was renewed next day; but, on the 20th, the operation was interrupted by the appearance of the Austrian fleet under Tegetthoff. The Italian fleet was superior in gun power, and Tegetthoff had determined to rely on the use of the ram. Persano deployed his fleet to meet the Austrians, and, in the somewhat confused encounter which followed, the Italian ironclad *Re d'Italia* was rammed and sunk by Tegetthoff's flagship the *Ferdinand Max*, while the Italian ironclad *Palestro* took fire and afterwards blew up. The defeated Italian fleet retired to Ancona.

Italy, as will be seen, was not a party to the armistice arranged at Nikolsburg on July 20th, and was unwilling to make peace unless the Trentino as well as Venetia were ceded to her. Accordingly, when Austria had agreed upon terms with Prussia, Archduke Albrecht sent four army corps (155,000 men) from the Danube to the southern theatre of war. But this army was never used, and Italy dropped her demand for the Trentino before concluding her peace with Austria.

The moral effect of the victory of Königgrätz was in proportion to the rapidity with which it had been gained and to the completeness which it soon proved to possess. In Austria itself, where the Government had hurried the monarchy into a war for which the military authorities were really ill prepared, an outburst of indignation inevitably followed, not against Benedek, but against the Belcredi Ministry; and manifestos issued by the Emperor to encourage the people met with little response, while in Hungary similar appeals fell wholly dead. In the south-western states of Germany, the traditional illwill against Prussia could not remain unmixed with the respect due to her military prowess. The Vatican was overwhelmed by the news, which filled the rest of Italy with rejoicing—not unalloyed by envy, soon to be intensified by the news of fresh disaster and accompanied by a trying sense of humiliation.

It has been seen how, just before the outbreak of the war (June 12th), the Emperor Francis Joseph concluded a treaty with the Emperor Napoleon, in which the former promised to cede Venetia at the end of the conflict, whatever its result. The notion was that, if victorious, Austria would compensate herself by the recovery of Silesia, while France would use her endeavour, probably not without a recompense of her own, for the preservation of the vanquished Prussia. To save her honour, Austria had formed an army in the south, thereby materially diminishing her power of resistance in the north; but its commander-in-chief, Archduke Albrecht, after gaining the battle of Custoza, had been directed not to engage in any further operations on a large scale, since the main object of the campaign had been accomplished. Immediately afterwards (July 2nd), Napoleon III had been asked by the Austrian Government to mediate an armistice between Italy and Austria; and, on the following day, he replied that, if Venetia was ceded to him at once, he would undertake the proposed

mediation, and endeavour, at the same time, to bring about an armistice with Prussia. To von der Goltz he said that neither he nor the Tsar would allow the existence of Austria to be placed in peril. But he had not really contemplated any such event before the news of Königgrätz arrived, and broke through the whole scheme which he had built on his belief (partly due to his own experience in 1859) of the superiority of the Austrian arms. Metternich, on the same evening (July 4th), announced to the Emperor Napoleon that Austria now made the promised cession of Venetia to him, proposing that he should send an occupying force into the province, so that the Austrian army might move north; and at the same time use his good offices with Italy for a termination of the conflict with Austria. In other words, in return for the transfer to her of the ceded Venetia, Italy was to agree, at the instance of Napoleon, to an immediate cessation of hostilities, and he was—*cui bono?*—to enable Austria to carry on the war against her German rival.

The King of Italy—*re galantùomo* in the crises of his public life—replied that he must consult Prussia, to whom he was bound by a treaty concluded on the advice of his magnanimous ally. Napoleon, who loved Italy, but had, in the first instance, to consider the gratification of the French public, now attempted the middle course of offering his mediation not only to the Italian, but also to the Prussian Government, and thus posing before Europe as the arbiter of her destinies. On the morning of July 5th, the *Moniteur* announced to exultant Paris that Venetia had been ceded by Austria to the Emperor of the French, and that he had proposed to the belligerents his mediation, which had already been accepted by Austria. On the evening of the same day, a council was held at St Cloud. Whatever may have been the precise proceedings at this important council, it is clear that in the course of it the Emperor's action underwent an entire change. Under the

influence of Drouyn de Lhuys and the Empress, he had begun by adhering to the programme of the party of action and to the idea of imposing his mediation on Prussia, if necessary, by force of arms; at the end, mainly in consequence of the protest of Marquis La Valette (Minister of the Interior), that the French army was as yet unprepared for a great war, he closed the sitting without a decision; but the summoning of the Chambers was abandoned, and the numbers of the army were left unchanged[1]. Italy and Prussia were left to accept or reject the proposed mediation, which neither Russia nor Great Britain[2] approved; so that the policy of France left her isolated in Europe.

It was seen above, that, on July 4th, General von Gablenz had appeared in the Prussian headquarters to ask for an armistice; on the following day the French offer of mediation reached King William at Horitz. He received it, at first, with an exclamation of incredulity; then, however, at once set down on paper certain demands, which he thought Prussia should make in the event of a mediation for peace. The advice of Bismarck, though his mind was full of suspicions of both France and Italy, was to conciliate the French Emperor by accepting the mediation, but, at the same time, to decline an armistice unless accompanied by satisfactory assurances of peace. A reply in this sense was returned on the same day; and von der Goltz was instructed to explain that an understanding between Prussia and Italy would be necessary for the conclusion of peace. Bismarck, using a favourite adjective, describes his reply as 'dilatory[3]'; and, in truth, except in so far as it was flattering to France, nothing was either gained or lost by it.

[1] See Rothan, *L'Affaire du Luxembourg*, p. 43, from La Valette's own account; and cf. *eund.*, *La Politique Française*, etc., pp. 191 n., 193.

[2] The Tories had come into power in June, and Lord Stanley had succeeded Lord Clarendon at the Foreign Office.

[3] *Gedanken und Erinnerungen*, vol. II, p. 33.

The Emperor Napoleon was gratified by the Prussian acceptance of his offer of mediation, of which he could not have, by any means, felt certain. Meanwhile, it had been made quite clear to the Emperor Napoleon that no armistice would be granted to Austria unless she agreed to a basis of peace. Drouyn de Lhuys still held the seals of the Foreign Office, though the attitude assumed by him was no longer provocative, as it had been at the council of July 5th; but Prince Reuss was sent to Paris with a letter from King William containing a general statement of Prussia's demands[1]. No objection was to be taken to the identity of the action of Prussia and Italy with regard to the armistice and the peace that was to follow, though in Italy, where Ricasoli had taken La Marmora's place as Minister-president, universal indignation prevailed against the intervention of France at the moment when the Italian army hoped to redeem the humiliation of Custoza. The new Ministry under Ricasoli, who counted on a Hungarian rising[2], resolved that the cession of Venetia must be made direct to Italy, and that an armistice could only be concluded on terms agreed to by Prussia. To the Italian military movement on Padua which ensued, Napoleon retorted by prohibiting any invasion of Venetia, and insisting on the Italian acceptance of the armistice conditionally approved by her ally. The Italian Ministry, hereupon, telegraphed its terms, which included the direct cession of Venetia to Italy, together with the cession of the Italian Tyrol; and, on July 8th, the Italian troops slowly began their march into Venetia, while the Prussian forces were, day by day, approaching nearer to Vienna.

Napoleon III seemed in an *impasse*. While his project of mediation, instead of leading to armistice and peace,

[1] Of Prince Reuss's mission a firsthand account is to be found in Sidney Whitman's *German Memories* (1912), pp. 191 ff.

[2] Bernhardi, vol. VII, p. 260; cf. *ib.*, p. 282.

was likely to end in collapse, besides giving offence to Italy, he continued, under the inspiration of Drouyn de Lhuys and his friends, to run counter to the policy on which, as Prince Reuss assured him, King William I had resolved, and which was openly based on the plan of Federal reform communicated to the Frankfort Diet on June 10th. Had the Emperor been stronger in body and in mind, and had he been left to himself and to his cherished principle of great nationalities, he might have found it in his heart (in which there was no pettiness) to leave Germany, as he had helped Italy, to realise his ideals. But he could not shut his eyes to the protests around him, that the creation of great monarchies around France made acquisitions of her own necessary to her[1]. Thus, while he abandoned Drouyn de Lhuys's policy of resisting the aggrandisement of Prussia, and turned a deaf ear to the insinuations of Gramont that, even if the opportune moment were not seized for striking a blow against her, a military demonstration at least should be arranged on the Rhine to awe her into moderation[2], he resolved upon countenancing her success in his own way, hoping to exact in return what, in the eyes of his own subjects, might seem an equivalent.

It is impossible here to pursue in detail the evolution of this hopelessly self-contradictory course of action. At first, the Emperor, continuing his conversations with the patient von der Goltz, indulged in the impracticable suggestion of two German Parliaments—a northern and a southern—and treated the question of French compensations with something very like indifference. Contrariwise, Bismarck, penetrating with his usual acumen to the core of the situation, perceived what mattered and what did not. On the one hand, as he told von der Goltz on July 9th, the best

[1] See the luminous exposition in Sorel's *Histoire Diplomatique de la Guerre Franco-Allemande* (1875), vol. I, p. 33.

[2] Cf. E. Ollivier, vol. VIII, pp. 467–9.

solution would be the complete or partial annexation by Prussia of the lands conquered by her—Saxony and Hanover, with Nassau and Electoral and Upper Hesse; on the other, the North-German Confederation, which it was proposed to establish, could not as yet be made to include southern Germany, nor could representatives be summoned thence to the Federal parliament. He added, as specially suitable to French feeling and Napoleonic principle, that he was prepared to recommend the King, should it be otherwise desirable, to let the political future of the districts of Schleswig north of Alsen depend on the vote of their inhabitants. Finally, he requested von der Goltz to ascertain what *non-German* compensations would be demanded by the French Government in the event of the above-mentioned annexations, and gave it to be understood that, were Austria to prove recalcitrant and France to assume a menacing attitude, Germany at large must be called upon to rise to the cry of the *Reichsverfassung* of 1849. Whatever modifications might be made in these proposals, they were of the utmost moment for the final result of the struggle into which Prussia had entered. She renounced, for the present, the inclusion of the southern states in the new Confederation; but she insisted on such annexations as would make her strong enough to hold her own at once —while to the future was to be left the consummation which Bismarck never ceased to keep in view[1].

The Emperor Napoleon III, on learning the designs of Bismarck from the ambassador, showed himself, in the main, acquiescent. To the North-German Confederation he had

[1] See W. Busch, in the essay already cited, p. 72. So early as July 4th, Bismarck privately declared himself ready to remain content, for the present, with the closer union of northern Germany as an *étape*; so late as July 5th, King William I, in a hurried memorandum as to Prussia's demands, claimed the hegemony over all Germany for Prussia.

no objection, and it was, he added, a matter of indifference to him whether the conquered states of the north were annexed or merely subjected to the Prussian military system, provided that Saxony was omitted from the list. When von der Goltz deprecated this notion, the Emperor proposed, as another way, the recognition of the right belonging to southern Germany, as an independent group of states, to conclude alliances and carry on war on their own account. To this, he said, he attached particular value, in deference to French public opinion, which feared the establishment of a new German empire under Prussian supremacy. As to compensation, he merely indulged in the futile enquiry whether the Rhine province might not be given to the King of Saxony; as to Prussian annexations, he was indifferent, so long as the integrity of the Austrian empire, with the exception of Venetia, was preserved—in accordance with the declaration of the Emperor Francis Joseph, that in no case would he surrender another inch of his dominions.

In a further audience (July 14th), von der Goltz brought up for approval a series of conditions—virtually the proposed peace preliminaries—which the Emperor had paid him the very unusual compliment of requesting him to draft, and which were in substance based on the results of the previous conversation. The integrity of the Austrian empire was to be maintained, with the exception of Venetia; but Austria was to recognise the dissolution of the old Confederation, in favour of a reorganisation of Germany in which she would have no share. She was to recognise the union of the states north of the Main under Prussian military headship, while those south of that river were to be at liberty to form a south-German union possessed of an international, independent existence, the national links between which and the northern union were to be regulated by common agreement. Schleswig-Holstein was to be

incorporated in Prussia, except those districts of northern Schleswig which, by a free vote, declared their desire to be reunited to Denmark. Austria and her allies were to pay part[1] of the costs of war. On the same evening, the proposed basis of preliminaries was telegraphed to the Emperor Francis Joseph and King William. Time pressed, and at both the chief seats of the war there were anxious doubts as to the mediation of France, which Bismarck had at first suspected to be, if not in the interest of Austria, at least designed to give her time. He had, therefore, urged the Italian Government to go on with the war, and allowed the formation, so late as July 14th, of a Hungarian legion, under the celebrated General Klapka, at Neisse in south-eastern Silesia.

But, on the night from July 11th to 12th, Benedetti had arrived from Berlin at the Prussian headquarters, which were then at Zwittau in Moravia. His instructions were only to bring about an armistice; he knew nothing about compensations, and, like his chief Drouyn de Lhuys, was ignorant of the basis of peace preliminaries, as settled between the Emperor and Goltz. Bismarck, on the other hand, who was familiar with the methods of procedure at the Tuileries, had no desire to discuss issues with Benedetti, before he knew the result of the Goltz negotiations and the Austrian reception of it[2]. But he informed Benedetti that an armistice could only be granted with the consent of Italy, and if a satisfactory Austrian assurance were given as to the final conditions of peace; while at the same time he insisted to the Italian Government on its not accepting the

[1] This reduction was an amendment inserted by the Emperor Napoleon.

[2] Cf. Rothan, *La Politique Française en* 1866, pp. 241–2. In *Gedanken und Erinnerungen*, vol. II, p. 42, Bismarck facetiously attributes Benedetti's comparatively punctual arrival at Zwittau to the 'unskilfulness of our military police.'

armistice. When, on the 13th, Benedetti was received by King William at Czernahora, whither the headquarters had moved on, he found that the Prussian demands had been much modified, in the sense of Bismarck's dispatch of the 9th. The proposal of a three days' cessation of arms, suggested on the Prussian side, and an Austrian counter-proposal, fell to the ground.

On the 14th, the basis of preliminaries settled between the Emperor Napoleon and von der Goltz reached Vienna, because of the easier telegraphic communication, two days before they reached Bismarck at the Prussian head-quarters. At Vienna, according to the accounts of neutral witnesses, a general panic prevailed, and the city was speedily declared in a state of siege; the Empress Elizabeth, with the imperial children, was sent to Budapest, although Hungary refused to move and the constitutionalists there would not allow recruiting till a Diet should have been convoked; the burgomaster of Vienna besought the Emperor not to expose the unfortified capital to the horrors of capture and to promise, if this were averted, to grant political concessions calculated to calm public feeling; and the Minister of Finance had to borrow 60 million of paper florins from the Bank. In these circumstances, it is not wonderful that the payment of the costs of the war should, among the conditions of the proposed basis of preliminaries, have seemed the most difficult to accept. For the rest, the Austrian Government was not in a position to refuse; even Gramont pointed out the necessity of the exclusion of Austria from a reorganised Germany; and Deák, when, a few days afterwards, he was received in audience by the Emperor Francis Joseph at Vienna, spoke in the same sense from the Hungarian point of view[1].

[1] Deák's bearing was perfectly straightforward and, in the fullest sense of the word, loyal. He had taken no part in the efforts of Klapka; what he now demanded was not more than he had

The great sacrifice, it was felt, had to be made, and Austria's cohesion with Germany whose destinies she had for centuries controlled, brought to an end[1].

For the moment, however, Mensdorff and the Austrian Government paused, as awaiting Prussia's decision; and Bismarck, anxious above all to induce Austria to make peace before France swerved from her present line of pacific intervention, attempted to bring further pressure upon the Vienna Government. He proposed to Dr Giskra, burgomaster of Brünn, who, in the Frankfort days, had warmly advocated Austrian interests and had since been a leading member of the German party in the Austrian *Reichsrat*, to bear to Vienna proposals for the conclusion of peace on a basis more favourable to Austria than that now under consideration. The main difference was that no payment of the costs of the war should be exacted from Austria, and that both the southern states and Austria should retain a free hand as to their future relations. In other words, Germany was to be divided into two parts, under the Prussian and the Austrian hegemony respectively. The *quid pro quo* was to be the absolute exclusion from the peace negotiations of all intervention or mediation on the part of France. In Gramont's judgment, Bismarck's object in this move was to create illwill between Austria and France, and then, in conjunction with the latter and Italy, to deal the finishing stroke against Austria. The latter supposition seems out of the question, for Bismarck had no wish to destroy the Austrian monarchy[2]; but he may, very probably, have

demanded before Königgrätz—the restoration of the constitution of which Hungary had been deprived in 1848.

[1] Anastasius Grün declared *Finis Austriae* to have arrived; and Grillparzer doubted whether he, a German poet, could still call himself a German. Friedjung, vol. II, p. 351.

[2] Cf. O. Lorenz, *Kaiser Wilhelm I*, etc., pp. 72 ff.

intended a warning to France, if she went back from her present pacific attitude, or even if she declined to assent to the inclusion of sufficient Prussian annexations in the peace programme.

Giskra executed his commission, though not in person, sending to Vienna, in his place, Baron Herring, president of the Brünn Tribunal of Commerce; and, on the news of a separate negotiation between Prussia and Austria affecting the future of the southern states being contemplated, von der Pfordten also betook himself to the Austrian capital. Had Herring's terms been ultimately accepted on both sides, the pacification would have meant the restoration of friendship between Austria and Prussia, though on a new basis without the old Diet, and France would have been confronted by a reunited Germany. But it was not to be. The scheme was unsympathetically received by Esterházy, the most influential personage at Vienna with regard to foreign affairs; and the agent received the evasive reply that, if Prussia desired a direct negotiation with Austria, a plenipotentiary would be sent; but that the matter could not be carried further as a more or less private transaction. Herring, on July 19th, hastened to Nikolsburg as fast as his horses could carry him—to be informed, on his arrival, by Bismarck that he had come an hour too late.

In the meantime, Bismarck, now in full possession of the terms settled by Napoleon with von der Goltz, had, on the 17th, telegraphed to the ambassador that the annexations to Prussia, not mentioned in their draft, had become a necessity, if that draft were to be adopted as the basis of peace negotiations. Five days would be allowed for a suspension of hostilities; but the assent of Napoleon to the acquisition by Prussia of north-German territory with from three to four million inhabitants would be indispensable to the acceptance of his programme as a basis of the armistice and of the peace which was to follow. The personal will

of King William counted for much in this demand. He had, at first, contemplated the cession to Prussia of portions of states only, unaccompanied by the deposition of any reigning house; but, now that Bismarck had persuaded him to renounce for the present the hegemony over all Germany, he had made up his mind, if there was to be peace, to gather in more solid fruits of victory. Von der Goltz's report to Bismarck of the Emperor Napoleon's opinion was reassuring. On the 18th, the Austrian Ministers held their last conference with Benedetti and Gramont, and showed themselves ready to fall in with the Prussian demand, provided that the integrity and independence of Saxony, the only state which had effectively as well as faithfully supported Austria, were safeguarded. With the end for which he had energetically striven at last secured[1], Benedetti at once returned from Vienna to Nikolsburg, where (as Bismarck was unwell) the decisive meeting was put off till the following day. On the 19th, though the King had still spoken of the probability of a second great battle in which the Austrians would be able to make better use of their cavalry than they had at Königgrätz[2], Benedetti was informed (without any mention of the Prussian annexations) that Prussia accepted the basis of preliminaries submitted by France. An hour later, Baron Herring, in his turn, arrived at Nikolsburg.

The formal Austrian acceptance, on which the Prussian had been made dependent, followed on the 20th, and on the 22nd a suspension of hostilities began, which was to last till the 27th. Only a few hours after the fight at Blumenau had

[1] Benedetti's abilities have been much underrated by German historians, influenced no doubt, as is well pointed out by Lettow-Vorbeck (vol. II, p. 624), by the popular tradition of the Ems episode. For himself, he felt far more deeply the sharpness with which his endeavours were criticised in France.

[2] Lettow-Vorbeck, vol. II, p. 650.

been stopped, negotiations at Count Mensdorff's castle of Nikolsburg began. Prussia was represented by Bismarck, Austria by Karolyi and Baron Brenner; and Moltke and General Count Degenfeld appeared as military referees. The Italian envoy at Berlin, Count Barral, took no part in the deliberations, though Bismarck suggested that he and Govone should be instructed to do so; and Benedetti, whose functions as mediator were now declared at an end, remained at Nikolsburg mainly as an observer. Italy's possession of Venetia had now been secured; and the main object of the negotiations was, in Bismarck's eyes, to obtain, with as much speed as possible, the indispensable gains due to the Prussian victories. From this point of view, it was necessary to moderate the Prussian demands; and to this course, after a very contentious council of war held on the 19th, he, with the timely and, in the circumstances, magnanimous aid of the Crown-prince, succeeded in persuading the King on the following day[1].

The actual discussion of the preliminaries of peace began on July 23rd. Immediate assent was given to the clauses providing for the integrity of the Austrian dominions (with the exception of Venetia), which Bismarck had persuaded his master to accept; the dissolution of the old Germanic Confederation, and the formation of a North-German and, if desired by the southern states, of a South-German Confederation (the concession to the latter of 'an international, independent position' being omitted), as well as the incorporation of Schleswig-Holstein in the Prussian monarchy, with the retrocession to Denmark of such of the North-Schleswig districts as might desire it.

[1] The account of these transactions given above follows the order of events which seems established, by the researches summarised in the note of Lettow-Vorbeck, vol. II, pp. 661–2, as against Bismarck's reminiscences.

But the question of the costs of the war called forth a strong protest on the part of the Austrian plenipotentiaries, who, very logically, rejected Bismarck's half-ironical proposal to substitute for these costs a cession to Prussia of territory in Austrian Silesia. The discussion, therefore, passed on to the question of the Prussian annexations in northern Germany, against which, as Bismarck had, just before the meeting of the plenipotentiaries, been informed by von der Goltz, the French Emperor had nothing to say, save that he hoped the King of Saxony would be left in possession of at least part of his dominions. The Austrian plenipotentiaries, however, insisted, as on a point of honour, on the preservation of the integrity as well as the autonomy of the kingdom of their Emperor's faithful ally; and, curiously enough, as in 1814, a critical difference seemed likely to prolong itself on the Saxon question. On the other hand, the Austrian assertion that, according to the treaty with Bavaria of June 14th, no peace could be concluded by Austria without her neighbour (von der Pfordten was in attendance at Vienna for the purpose) was met by Bismarck's offer to include Bavaria in the treaty, if she would consent to contribute part of the costs of the war and make a territorial compensation to the Grand-duke of Hesse for the northern portion of his dominions, proposed to be annexed to Prussia. Karolyi, naturally, saw no objection; but von der Pfordten, on reflexion, preferred a separate pacification with the conqueror.

Between the first and the second sitting of the conference the difficulties in the way of a settlement rose to their height. Bismarck, it has been seen, had made up his mind that Austria must be induced to make peace, before Tsar Alexander II, whose insistence on the meeting of a European congress had been made known to the Prussian King and his Minister on the 24th, had his way, and before the Emperor Napoleon abandoned his attitude of assent to

the acquisition by Prussia of four millions of new subjects. With this object in view he was prepared to leave the kingdom of Saxony territorially intact, so long as its military forces were placed at the disposition of Prussia. In short, Bismarck was ready to give way, in face of the dangerous position in which Prussia might land herself by excessive demands, and from which she could only escape by trusting either to the uncertainty of a prolonged war or of discussions with the Great Powers at large. Moreover, it was no secret that the cholera had made its appearance in the Prussian army, and that an August campaign would have to be carried on under very unfavourable climatic conditions. These arguments he, on the 24th, in a most remarkable memorandum, laid at length before the King, who now saw himself definitely called upon to allow Austria to issue forth from the conflict, after her crushing defeat, without any loss of German territory, and Saxony, her best ally and Prussia's bitterest opponent, without any loss of territory at all. At no stage of their joint action, were Bismarck's high courage and his master's good sense made more conspicuously manifest[1]. The Minister prevailed; and the King contented himself with the conclusion that, 'if the just expectations of Prussia and her army must remain unfulfilled, the victor must give way to the vanquished before the gate of Vienna, and leave the judgment of his action to posterity.'

To the last moment, the balance had been trembling between war and peace. Prussia might still, in accordance with the wish of her military leaders, determine to carry on the war. Austria was recovering something of her former self-confidence with the news of the naval success at Lissa, an Italian request on the 23rd for a cessation of arms, and the arrival of troops from the south to swell the force

[1] See Bismarck's memorandum in full in Sybel, vol. v, pp. 223–6, with the King's final decision.

waiting to defend Vienna. But Bismarck's long-sighted prudence had changed the situation, and the conferences held on the 25th and 26th ran a smoother course. At one point only, when, after the integrity of the kingdom of Saxony had been agreed upon, Karolyi demanded its inclusion in an eventual southern confederation, Bismarck's passion flared up uncontrollably, and he declared that, even if he were ordered by his sovereign to accept this demand, he would, rather than acquiesce, instantly resign his office. Thereupon, it was agreed that the future position of Saxony in the North-German Confederation should be left to be settled by treaty between them. For the rest, the demand on Austria for the costs of the war, by means of various reductions, was fixed at 20 million dollars (*c.* £3,000,000); and there remained nothing to settle beyond the conditions, which Moltke and Degenfeld arranged, as to the four weeks' armistice which was to follow on the cessation of arms, prolonged to August 2nd, and which included the south-German allies of Austria. During its course, peace negotiations proper were to proceed at Prague. On the 26th, just before the Preliminaries were signed, Benedetti had presented himself before Bismarck with a dispatch from Drouyn de Lhuys, which pointed out that the assent to the Prussian annexations depended on a prior compensation for France, and that the Emperor was prepared to enter into negotiations on the subject, so soon as his functions as mediator had come to an end. He was proceeding to refer to territory on the left bank of the Rhine, when Bismarck begged him to make no official communication on this head 'to-day.' The Preliminaries were signed accordingly. On the 27th the news arrived that the Russian proposal of a congress had been formally made at Paris and London. But the Preliminaries were duly ratified on the 28th. The first stage of the peace negotiations, and with it the intervention of France and of Russia, had been left behind.

After the Preliminaries of Nikolsburg had been signed, Bismarck was, of course, ready to enter into a discussion with Benedetti on the question of French 'compensations,' as to the necessity of which the ambassador was now at one with Drouyn de Lhuys. But he would not listen to any mention of lands between Moselle and Rhine, and, though he did not at first exclude the notion of an arrangement as to the Bavarian Palatinate, seemed rather to incline to his old idea of Belgium, which, he was good enough to point out, might unite her destinies to those of France, without forfeiting her autonomy. At the same time, he telegraphed to Petersburg, that Prussia could not enter a European congress without a basis securing to her the advantages gained by her arms; and, reassured by information that Lord Stanley had expressed the gratification felt in England at the success of the Prussian arms and saw no necessity for a congress, readily acquiesced in the request of the Tsar that a confidential emissary should be sent to him from Berlin. Manteuffel immediately received instructions to undertake this special mission; and, as France soon followed the example of Great Britain in declining the congress, this dangerous expedient was finally averted.

But the French problem remained. Public opinion waxed more and more eager for some territorial acknowledgment; even Rouher agreed with Drouyn de Lhuys as to its necessity, and Prince Napoleon went at least so far as to consider a small 'compensation' requisite. At the close of July, the Emperor Napoleon was at Vichy—so distracted by his malady that he hardly had a will, though he might still cherish a policy, of his own. Here, it seems hardly too much to say, Drouyn de Lhuys extorted from him his consent to a draft treaty, by which Prussia was to restore to France the districts ceded by her in 1815, while Bavaria and Hesse-Darmstadt were, in return for suitable compensations, to cede to her their

possessions on the left bank of the Rhine—those of Hesse-Darmstadt being expressly stated to include Mainz. At the same time, there was to be an end to any connexion of Luxemburg or Limburg with the North-German Confederation, and of the Prussian right of garrisoning the fortress of Luxemburg. Benedetti, to whom the draft treaty was sent on July 29th, reported on August 5th that he had laid it before Bismarck, and had met with a blunt refusal, which was subsequently confirmed by the King, and expanded by the Minister—to the effect that, in the event of French insistence on these terms, Prussia would at once make peace with Austria, by leaving the south of Germany to her, on much the same terms as those proposed by Baron Herring at Vienna[1].

Manteuffel had, in the meantime, arrived at Petersburg, no doubt with the draft treaty in his pocket, by way of an opportune object-lesson. As a matter of fact, he contrived to secure the acquiescence of the Tsar in the Prussian acquisitions, though not his approval of them, with the aid of an undertaking that Upper Hesse (the section of the grand-duchy north of the Main) should not be taken away from his brother-in-law, Grand-duke Lewis III, and that Württemberg, the monarchy of King Charles, another of his brothers-in-law, should be treated with consideration. It was now France who was becoming isolated, and had to consider very seriously the eventuality

[1] Cf. *ante*, p. 308. The situation, from the military point of view, is explained with the utmost clearness in a memorandum from Moltke to Bismarck dated August 8th, and printed, with a supplementary letter to Roon, in M.'s *Militärische Korrespondenz*, part II (1866), Nos. 329 and 330. Moltke urged the speedy conclusion of peace with Austria, lest France should demand territorial cessions. If she insisted on these, she must be withstood by a war in which all non-Austrian Germany might be induced to join. France, to carry on such a war, must have an understanding with Austria; a general war against both must be mainly defensive, but must not be shunned.

of a Prussian resistance to her demands leading to war. Marshal Randon did no more than his duty in reviewing the resources of his department; but, though it is not to be supposed that the 30,000 men still in Mexico or the incompleteness of the supply of *chassepots* turned the balance, the Minister of War's scruples fell in with the real wishes of the Emperor. On August 11th, he informed Benedetti that the draft treaty rejected by the King of Prussia would be abandoned, and that, on his return to Berlin, he was to request that the proposal was to be regarded there as *non-avenu*. Drouyn de Lhuys was, at last, obliged to resign his office; and, until the arrival of his destined successor, Marquis de Moustier, from Constantinople, foreign affairs were entrusted to La Valette, the consistent advocate of friendly relations with Prussia, and Rouher, whose vital principle was that the Emperor's Government must be carried on. There was now every hope of the speedy conclusion of peace on the basis of the Preliminaries; though the compensation policy of France had really not been dropped, but only entered into another phase.

Before this became manifest, Bismarck had begun his negotiations for separate treaties of peace with the southern states, which had not been included in the Preliminaries of Nikolsburg. They were, for the most part, carried on without much difficulty; for the efforts of these Governments to obtain the good offices of the Emperor Napoleon, to whom, following the example of Saxony, they had made appeal, had remained resultless, and Bismarck had declared to them that there could be no present question of their admission into the North-German Confederation[1]. The negotiation with Württemberg, which was favoured in deference to the Tsar's interest in its Court, was concluded in a week.

[1] Morier (*Memoirs and Letters*, vol. II, p. 86) rightly doubts whether, at this time, Bismarck would have taken the step in question, even if France and Russia had assented to it.

She paid a war contribution of 8 million florins (*c.* £542,000), and the *Zollverein* treaties with her were revived, with liberty to her to give notice to quit. The really important part of the negotiations remained in the dark. The article in the Nikolsburg Preliminaries leaving the southern states free to enter into a union with one another[1], having been interpreted by both Varnbüler and Bismarck as conferring a right, but not implying an obligation, it was made clear by the former that Württemberg (and, as it appeared, Baden likewise) had no intention of taking advantage of the clause; and thus it became obvious that there was very little likelihood of the southern confederation ever coming into actual existence. In any case, the two Ministers resolved on the important step of enlarging the article in the treaty of peace between their states which provided for a mutual guarantee of their territories into a distinct, and for the present secret, treaty of offensive and defensive alliance, according to which, in case of war[2], the troops of Württemberg were to be placed under Prussian military command. Both treaties, that of peace and that of alliance, were signed on August 13th.

Four days later, two similar treaties were concluded

[1] *Ante*, p. 305.

[2] The question whether it was open to Württemberg, and to the other southern states, in the analogous treaties with them, to decide in each case whether the *casus foederis* had arisen or not, was left unmooted in the conclusion of the treaty; and the phrase 'in case of war' remained without any restriction or specification. Cf. Ollivier, vol. VIII, p. 572. In 1867, Varnbüler ventured on the assertion that the right of deciding as to the existence of a *casus foederis* had been reserved to Württemberg, and that, at the time of the Luxemburg difficulty, Bismarck had actually enquired whether Württemberg proposed to carry out the treaty of alliance or to remain neutral. Varnbüler's view of the *casus foederis* question reappeared in Bavaria early in 1870. See O. Lorenz, *Kaiser Wilhelm I*, etc., pp. 144 and 220.

with Baden. Here, again, there was no question of territorial cession, and the war contribution was fixed at the moderate sum of 6 million florins (rather more than £500,000), which Bismarck, notwithstanding the kindly interposition of the King, declined to reduce still further. Bismarck was, personally, not over-friendly to the Baden Court, partly perhaps because of its close intimacy with the Crown-prince and Crown-princess. In the war of 1866, he had advised Baden to remain neutral, obtaining, if necessary a guarantee of its integrity from France[1]. The Baden Government now wished to conclude a military convention with Prussia, placing its troops under Prussian control and admitting a Prussian garrison into Rastadt; but Bismarck declined the offer as premature; demurring, at the same time, to the suggestion of Roggenbach that Prussia's dealings with the south, to which the relative magnitude of Bavaria was a hindrance, would be facilitated by the 'agglomeration' of the Bavarian Palatinate with Baden, and perhaps by further rearrangements, involving the annexation of Ansbach-Baireuth to Prussia (a favourite notion with King William)[2]. The treaties actually signed were therefore on the lines of those with Württemberg.

The settlements with Bavaria and with Hesse-Darmstadt went through several stages of discussion, complicated to such an extent by the exchanges which, for her own sake, had been suggested by France that they cannot be successively traced here. As a matter of fact, Bismarck's resistance to the alienation of any German territory saved both states from the surrender of any of their own; but neither von der Pfordten, nor the grand-ducal Minister Freiherr von Dalwigk, one of the most persistent among the adversaries of Prussia in the Governments of the petty

[1] Cf. *ib.*, p. 52.

[2] Cf. *Gedanken und Erinnerungen*, vol. II, pp. 73–4.

states[1], was aware of the history of the transactions with France, and the Hessian statesman stoutly resisted Bismarck's proposal for the immediate admission of a Prussian garrison into Mainz. On the other hand, von der Pfordten protested his patriotic sentiments, but took exception to the exorbitant war contribution of 30 million florins (over £2,500,000) which it was intended to impose on Bavaria. In the end, after Bismarck had admitted von der Pfordten into his confidence as to the recent French overtures, the two statesmen embraced; and, by entering into an offensive and defensive alliance with Prussia on the same terms as those concluded by her neighbours, Bavaria, though her war contribution remained unreduced, made her peace on the same terms as theirs, without any further loss, beyond a quite unimportant rectification of frontier (August 22nd)[2]. Von der Pfordten's virtual success—for such it was—is, probably, to be explained, not by any immediate fear of France, but by a certain nervousness traceable throughout Bismarck's earlier dealings with Bavaria[3]. Hesse-Darmstadt, in her treaty, was allowed to retain Upper Hesse; but (in accordance with her own offer), this province was to be included in the North-German Confederation. She was, however, to offer the little landgravate of Hesse-Homburg, which had recently fallen to her, to the lawful successor to Hesse-Cassel (the exiled Elector's cousin and namesake), in the event of his recognising the incorporation of the paternal electorate in the Prussian monarchy—an arrangement analogous to that

[1] For Beust's defence of Dalwigk see *Memoirs* (E. tr.), vol. I, p. 333. 'Perhaps no one,' he says, 'except myself has ever been so violently and savagely attacked' as Dalwigk.

[2] King Lewis II characteristically indulged his romantic fancy in inviting King William I to share with him the ownership of the castle at Nürnberg, 'the venerable citadel of your Majesty's ancestors.' The offer was afterwards, for legal reasons, withdrawn.

[3] Cf. O. Lorenz, pp. 76 ff.

by which the Brunswick succession was to be eventually reserved for the Crown-prince of Hanover (September 3rd).

The most significant part of these arrangements remained a secret to the French Government till information on the subject reached it from Rothan at Frankfort in November; and to the world at large till Bismarck revealed the treaties in March 1867[1]. Before the negotiations had been completed, the conferences for the definitive peace between Austria and Prussia had opened at Prague. The two Powers were respectively represented by Brenner and Werther. Still intent upon hastening the conclusion of peace, Bismarck, from the first, instructed the Prussian plenipotentiary to maintain as conciliatory as possible an attitude towards France, who, though she had ceased to mediate, continued to interfere, and was still busily engaged in formulating her own demands for compensations. With these the Austro-Prussian pacification had no direct concern. In deference to the wish of the Emperor Napoleon, that the clause reserving to the confederation which might be formed by the southern states 'an international, independent existence,' these words, which had been omitted at Nikolsburg, were restored at Prague in an article of the Treaty. In reply to a protest by Benedetti against the intended omission of the clause as to the eventual conditional retrocession to Denmark of certain North-Schleswig districts, Bismarck agreed to its reinsertion, and it was, likewise, included in the Treaty.

A more serious difficulty was the relation of Italy to the proposed Peace. With her, Austria insisted on treating separately; whereupon, Prussia declared that the Austro-Italian Treaty must formally mention the incorporation of Venetia in the kingdom of Italy. This was opposed by Austria, on the twofold ground that she had ceded Venetia to the

[1] Rothan, *La Politique Française*, p. 392.

Emperor of the French, and that she had not yet recognised the kingdom of Italy; but, in the end, it was agreed to state in the Treaty that, after the Emperor Napoleon had formally declared Venetia to have been, so far as it depended on him, acquired by Italy, the Emperor of Austria acceded to this declaration and assented to the union of Venetia with the Italian kingdom. Thus, without any further essential changes in the Preliminaries, the Treaty of Peace between Austria and Prussia was signed by their plenipotentiaries on August 23rd, and ratified within a week. The Treaty between Austria and Italy hung fire for more than a month longer.

The question as to the Italian share in the Austrian national debt had given rise to renewed discussion, but had been finally determined in a sense more favourable to Italy than had been desired by Austria, who, in the previous negotiations, had rejected the French suggestion that Italy should be liable only for the debt incurred on behalf of the ceded province of Venetia. To this principle Austria had, at last, after pressure from Bismarck, agreed, in the form that Italy accepted the liability for debts recognised as attaching to Venetia. The sum was finally fixed at 35 million silver florins (*c.* £3,500,000). As to the vote of the population of Venetia on the subject of incorporation in Italy, it was avoided by the arrangement that the province should be transferred by a French commissioner to the municipal authorities of Venice for their free disposal. Thus quietly was the Venetian question in its last phase allowed to flicker out. The Austro-Italian Treaty was finally signed on October 3rd.

It will be seen in a subsequent chapter how, concurrently with the negotiations for the Peace of Prague the policy of France had never been more disturbing than in the day of settlement. But Bismarck had not hastened the peace negotiations in vain; and, whatever might

ensue, Prussia stood before Europe with a gain of 1300 German (*c.* 27,500 English) square miles of territory, and nearly three million and a quarter inhabitants. She had obtained this result by sacrifices of life and limb which could not be termed abnormal, and without an excessive expenditure of her own[1]. She had not achieved the political unity of Germany, or even of the non-Austrian part of it, under her hegemony. But she was able to face the future awaiting her as mistress of northern Germany, in command of the military forces of the south-west, with Austria crippled, Russia and Great Britain amicable, and France uncertain of herself.

[1] See Friedjung, vol. II, pp. 493–4. He calculates that in the war Prussia had lost 3473 dead, with 12,675 wounded and not more than 495 missing. The Prussian net cost of the war had, after deduction of the Austrian war contribution, amounted to 34½ million dollars (rather more than £5,000,000); from which should further be deducted 15 millions due to Austria on account of the Schleswig-Holstein War, but renounced by her.

CHAPTER V

THE NORTH-GERMAN CONFEDERATION

On August 4th, 1866, a week and a day after that on which he had ratified the Preliminaries of Peace at Nikolsburg, King William I returned to his capital, where he was received with jubilant acclamations. On the same day, a circular dispatch from Bismarck's hand informed the Governments whose adherence had been invited immediately after the critical vote at the Frankfort Diet, that, with two insignificant exceptions[1], there had been a general readiness to adhere, and laid before them a draft scheme of alliance. The purpose of this alliance—the North-German Confederation in germ—was to preserve the independence and integrity, and the inner and outer security, of the allied states. The draft Federal constitution, communicated to the other Governments by the Prussian on June 10th, provided for the exclusion of Austria, the assumption of the military command by Prussia in northern Germany, and the election, by universal suffrage, of a parliament. The several Governments were invited to send plenipotentiaries to Berlin for discussing and settling this constitution. The war had, momentarily, suspended the *Zollverein* treaties of 1864; but the renewal of them was looked for on all sides. Representatives of the interests involved—the Committees of the German *Handelstag*

[1] Cf. p. 185, *ante*.

(Commercial Union), of the Congress of Political Economists, and of the *Nationalverein*—had, on the same August 4th, assembled at Brunswick. At one of their meetings, the quick-witted Braun of Wiesbaden (afterwards one of the founders of the National-Liberal party) moved that, although economic union should also be maintained with the states outside the proposed Confederation, the administration of the *Zollverein* should be unconditionally transferred to the central authority of the new Federal state, and its legislation to the Federal parliament, to which representatives of the southern states should, in due proportion, be admitted for this special purpose. And it was further unanimously agreed at Brunswick, that this arrangement should only remain in force till 1870 at latest; after which date the southern states must choose between joining the North-German Confederation and quitting the *Zollverein*.

The Prussian diet was opened by the King on August 5th. The passage in his speech of most immediate interest referred to the question of a parliamentary indemnity for the unconstitutional action of the Government in the budgetless period, which it was felt must come to an end, now that a great war had been carried to a victorious issue without the imposition of extraordinary burdens. Before the lines could be laid down on which the greater part of Germany was to be reorganised under Prussian headship, it was indispensable that a formal reconciliation should be effected between the Prussian Crown and Parliament. But, in the conservative party, a strong feeling existed against any acknowledgment of the constitutional demands insisted on by the majority of the Chamber during the period of conflict. Bismarck attributes to a conversation of many hours between himself and the King on their journey from Prague the final assent of the latter to a policy of conciliation;

but this account differs from that of Roon, not to mention other authorities[1].

So far back as the spring of 1865, when the outbreak of war with Austria had not seemed impossible, Bismarck, although far from conciliatory in the Chamber, had shown a passing inclination to approach the Liberals; but nothing of a positive nature had occurred before, on April 9th, 1866, Savigny brought forward the Prussian Federal reform proposals at Frankfort. When he found that this, the first serious overture of the Government to its Liberal adversaries, was not taken seriously by them, he proceeded—very gradually, if only in consideration for the King—after a different fashion. Secret interviews with Old-Liberal and Liberal leaders followed in April, and, thereupon, conversations with Bennigsen and other chiefs of the National-Liberals (not yet formally calling themselves by that name) outside Prussia. At the end of May the adroit von der Heydt, in succeeding Bodelschwingh as Minister of Finance, had taken office on the express condition that, after the War, the diet should be asked to grant an indemnity bill for the years of budgetless government; and, immediately afterwards, Bismarck, who had promised to support such a measure, ascertained from his old adversary Twesten that no war-loan would be granted, unless the Government formally acknowledged the right, claimed by the Chamber, of approving or disapproving the budget. But, in the draft speech from the throne suggested by Twesten, no mention is made of an indemnity; nor is

[1] See *Gedanken und Erinnerungen*, vol. II, pp. 67 ff. and Roon, *Denkwürdigkeiten* (5th ed.), vol. II, pp. 480 ff. In this matter, which is one of much historical interest, it seems safe to follow the conclusions of the careful enquiry by Gerhard Ritter, *Die Entstehung der Indemnitätsfrage von* 1866, in *Historische Zeitschrift*, vol. CXIV, 1. Heft. Sybel's narrative appears to need revision in some particulars. Cf. also Keudell, *Bismarck et sa Famille* (French tr.), pp. 276 ff. and Oncken, *Bennigsen*, vol. II, p. 114.

there any likelihood that, before the close of the War, Bismarck, like some of his colleagues, favoured the notion.

In the course of the War, Eulenburg and von der Heydt, also, prepared drafts of the coming speech from the throne; but these differed from each other in their treatment of the budget question. Von der Heydt held that all moneys spent during the budgetless period were spent illegally. The conservative Eulenburg, while characterising the impugned action of the Government as 'apparently' unconstitutional, said nothing of an indemnity; and, indeed, the word and the notion were alike alien to Prussian constitutional law and, of course, derived from English precedent. He proposed a 'supplementary grant,' allowing that, in the matter of military expenditure, the budget-right of the Chamber had not obtained full validity.

The result of the War naturally disposed the Government, more than ever, to a policy of conciliation. On the day after Königgrätz, Bismarck promised the Crown-prince, whose constitutional principles never wavered, to meet the Opposition, so far as he could, in the matter of the speech from the throne, which had then been fixed for July 30th. On July 18th, the Ministry discussed the drafts and rejected von der Heydt's, adopting another (probably Eulenburg's), but showing themselves on the whole conciliatory. Bismarck was, on this occasion, represented by Werther, who alone voted with von der Heydt.

At Nikolsburg, in the critical days before the signing of the Preliminaries of Peace, Bismarck had ready to his hand the main argument for insisting on a policy of conciliation and unity at home. The danger of direct French intervention had been, for the moment, averted; but a Franco-Austrian alliance was still possible. After all, a Prussian indemnity was a less daring demand than had been the changes in the German constitution propounded at

the time of the rupture with Austria. Whether Bismarck prevailed or whether, as one of the conservative Ministers[1] put on record, the King arrived at a conclusion without consulting his chief Minister, the policy of taking advantage of the meeting of the Prussian diet to ask for a parliamentary indemnity carried the day. Hereupon, the conservative Ministers made one more attempt to avert what they viewed as a surrender. Count zur Lippe (Minister of Justice, and the most unpopular man in the Government), Count Itzenplitz (Commerce), Mühler, Selchow and Eulenburg united in a protest, and the last-named and ablest of them asked for an audience from the King, to which he proposed that von der Heydt should accompany him; but Bismarck objected to the practice of departmental interviews. A deputation of conservatives, organised by Bismarck's 'die-hard' friend, but no longer the keeper of his conscience[2], Hans von Kleist-Retzow, arrived at Prague to press their views on their sovereign; it appears that even legal opinions had been obtained, to the effect that the recent large extension of his dominions would justify the King in suspending the constitution for future revision[3]. At last, on August 3rd—unless a supplementary victory had to be achieved in the train to Berlin—the King was persuaded to sign von der Heydt's draft of the speech from the throne, in which the passage asking for an indemnity had been toned down to meet conservative feeling[4]; and, in this

[1] Mühler, the Minister of Public Worship and Education, who was detested even more because of his religious than because of his political views.

[2] See H. von Petersdorff, *Kleist-Retzow: ein Lebensbild*. Stuttgart, 1907.

[3] As to this deputation. cf. *Gedanken und Erinnerungen*, vol. II, p. 62.

[4] More especially, the phrase declaring that the Government 'could and might not' refuse to act as it had acted under the pressure of necessity was altered into an assertion that in such circumstances it 'can and may not'—refuse to overleap the law.

form, it was delivered at Berlin, two days later, to the assembled *Landtag*.

Here, the general political aspect boded well for the Government. The *Herrenhaus*, as a matter of course, rejoiced in the triumph of the Ministry, which was also that of the country; though the majority regretted the indemnity demand as unnecessary and even dangerous. In the Chamber of Deputies, the conservatives, though numerous, were still a minority, even with the addition of the Old-Liberal remnant; and everything depended on the measure of agreement which could be reached between the *Fortschritt* and the Left Centre. Inasmuch as the groups further to the left, and with them the Catholic and the Polish fraction, alike remained in opposition, it was certain that the proposals of the Government would call forth a shower of amendments, and that Bismarck's patience would be severely tried.

After the delivery of the royal speech, in which the mention of an intended application for an indemnity was received with great applause, a committee was appointed by the Chamber to prepare an address in reply. Not less than five drafts represented the differences of opinion in committee and Chamber. The conservative draft ignored the proposed indemnity altogether; while that of the *Fortschritt*, which preponderated in the committee, deplored that the *Reichsverfassung* of 1849 had not been forthwith proclaimed. But the feeling that disunion at this moment was shameful now asserted itself; and, on the motion of the veteran General Stavenhagen (August 23rd), a modification of the *Fortschritt* draft, softened in several important points, was adopted against a minority of about 25 votes (Poles and a few other Catholics, and the irreconcileable radical Jacoby). On the 25th, the King graciously received the address. It had, he said, been his duty, when no law could be passed, to act as he had acted, and he would always do

the same in similar circumstances; 'but, Gentlemen, it will not happen again.'

Meanwhile, the Indemnity bill had been laid before the Chamber. Indemnity was to be granted to the Government for its unlawful expenditure in the years 1862–5; but, for 1866, it being now too late to prepare a budget in regular form, a credit of 154 million dollars (*c.* £22,000,000) was to be granted by the diet. In the budget-committee immediately appointed, decided opposition to this arrangement was offered only by members of the *Fortschritt*, who were willing to grant the necessary credit for 1866, but desired that, instead of being voted outright, an indemnity should be demanded afresh on the bringing forward of the budget for 1867. Ultimately, however, it having been pointed out that the military establishment would be henceforth fixed, not by the Prussian diet, but by the North-German parliament, a report in this sense was approved in committee by 25 to 8, and, after a memorable debate, was carried by 230 to 75, the minority being formed by the *Fortschritt*, a few of the Left Centre, and the Catholics. In the discussion, Waldeck, Schulze-Delitzsch and Virchow spoke strongly in opposition to the Government; but G. von Vincke, Lasker and, at the close, Twesten approved Bismarck and von der Heydt's middle way. The significance of the debate went beyond that of the question at issue; for it created a permanent split between the Liberals of the *Fortschritt* and those of the Left Centre, and laid the foundations of a new, National party[1]. The *Herrenhaus* on September 8th followed the lead of the Chamber of Deputies, with its usual unanimity, Kleist-Retzow, however, lamenting the mean surrender of the Government. Thus, the constitutional conflict had at last closed; a large proportion of the Liberals had rallied to the Government, and there had been no rupture between

[1] Oncken, *Bennigsen*, vol. II, p. 10.

the conservatives and Bismarck. '*In verbis simus faciles*' is the maxim with which he takes leave of the whole transaction[1]; and it fairly expresses the method of the change from the uncompromising defiance of 1863 to the tentative constitutionalism of the later months of 1866.

With the small states allied with Prussia during the War negotiations as to the future North-German Confederation had, by August 18th, progressed so far that the formation of it could be definitely proposed to the Prussian diet, on the basis of Bismarck's circular dispatch of August 7th. Only the two Mecklenburgs were, according to their wont, behindhand; nor was it till a few months later that their joint diet approved the accession of their Governments to the new Confederation, while reserving for later consideration the safeguarding of their own constitution, the right of acceding or not to the *Zollverein*, and certain other points.

In the lands which the Peace of Prague was definitively to add to the Prussian dominions, the current of enthusiasm, before which in Prussia itself party feeling had been obliged to give way, was necessarily far weaker. Even after the victory, the resistance of the higher nobility and the orthodox clergy, the chief pillars of the rule of the ousted dynasties, continued; though in Electoral Hesse and Nassau, the Liberals remained firm in their adherence to Prussia, with more or less open aversion, and in Hanover with angry indignation. Here, the leaders of the *Nationalverein*, who were to play a signal part in the political reorganisation of the German north, could for the present, except in the formerly Prussian province of East Friesland, reckon on support only from the towns. In Schleswig-Holstein, political fervour had subsided even before the War, and, though the Augustenburg party

[1] *Gedanken und Erinnerungen*, vol. II, p. 70.

remained unbroken[1], the spirit had largely gone out of it; so that a petition against annexation addressed by its leaders to the Prussian diet received hardly a tithe of the signatures which had formerly welcomed the arrival of Duke Frederick.

In the annexation bill brought before the Second Chamber on August 17th, Schleswig-Holstein was left unmentioned, because there had as yet been no formal settlement with Austria as to the future of the duchies[2]; and the Upper (or northern) portion of the grand-duchy of Hesse was likewise omitted, out of consideration for the Tsar. The bill, therefore, provided for the assumption of the government in Hanover, Electoral Hesse and Nassau and Frankfort by the King of Prussia, in the form, for the present, of a personal union between these states and the Prussian monarchy. There was no doubt as to the acceptance of the bill, after it had been examined by a special committee appointed for the purpose.

In his speech on the annexations, Bismarck took occasion to point out that Prussia must keep her promise as to the limits of the North-German Confederation, adding, with his usual frankness of statement, that it was questionable whether the desire for inclusion in that body was already sufficiently strong in southern Germany to call for immediate attention. Prussia must be made stronger, and this after a more satisfactory fashion than that adopted as to Saxony, either in 1815, when a part of it only was annexed, or now, when the civil and the military authority

[1] All the Schleswig-Holsteiners elected for the first constituent North-German *Reichstag* were Augustenburgers, except two Danes.

[2] After the Peace of Prague, a similar bill was passed for the annexation of Schleswig-Holstein. Rather later, on October 27th, Prussia concluded a treaty with Grand-duke Peter of Oldenburg, by which he renounced all his own claims on Schleswig-Holstein as well as those ceded to him by the Tsar (cf. pp. 139–40 and 200, note 2, *ante*), in return for a payment of three million dollars and a slight enlargement of his Eutin territory.

remained separate. To make a clean sweep of the petty states would have been to break faith with allies; and to proclaim the *Reichsverfassung* of 1849, though a more logical course, would hardly have commended itself to the reigning Princes. The committee, while agreeing to the main provisions of the bill, made bold to substitute a real for a personal union between the different parts of the enlarged state, and, since an interval was clearly necessary, proposed that, on October 2nd, 1867, the Prussian constitution should come into force throughout it. After a very notable speech from the radical Waldeck[1], extolling the annexations as the most important foundation for the completion of German unity, Bismarck agreed to the momentous change; and, in this form, the bill was accepted by the Second Chamber, with 273 against 14 votes. In the *Herrenhaus*—where a new faction was forming itself under the able leadership of Count Bethusy-Huc[2], popularly known as the Young Right, and afterwards calling itself the Free Conservatives—after a futile attempt in the reactionary interest to fix the proportion of members from the new provinces, the Government bill was approved, with a single dissentient.

The law determining the system of election to the parliament, or *Reichstag*, as it was proleptically to be called, of the new North-German Confederation was subjected to much opposition, when, after four weeks' discussion in committee, it came up for approval by the Chamber of Deputies. It was declared absurd that a state with twenty-four million inhabitants, and several states with a total population of five millions, should be represented in a common 'federal' assembly, and something more than anomalous (apart from the burden laid upon individual

[1] Treitschke, *Zehn Jahre*, etc., p. 155, calls it a 'great speech.'

[2] The family is stated to be of Languedoc origin.

members[1]), that this assembly should sit simultaneously with the Prussian diet, which had been established as part of a constitution described by Treitschke[2] as an ultra-Liberal draft sadly mutilated in order to please the Reaction. Yet the remedy of giving to the deputies of the lesser states, in matters of common interest, seat and vote in the Prussian diet, which would thus perform the functions of a North-German parliament, was inadmissible as ignoring the future development of the North-German Confederation. That the *Reichstag* was to be elected by universal suffrage, seemed alarming not only to many moderates, but to some radicals less sanguine than their leader Waldeck; while the proposal that the voting should be secret was an amendment introduced by the radicals themselves, and not accepted by the Government without misgiving. Finally, Bismarck deferring to the unanimous opinion of all the Liberal groups, it was agreed that, since the North-German constitution could not become law without the assent of the Prussian and other diets, the first parliament of the new Confederation should be summoned for discussion of that constitution, not for final settlement of it; and the *Herrenhaus* concurred, though adding a resolution indicating grave objection to the adoption of universal suffrage. The diet had taken the leap in the dark, or, rather, in the *chiaroscuro* of Bismarck's hopes that the masses would prove more loyal than the middle classes[3], and of the comforting reflexion that the elective system now adopted was open

[1] Bennigsen refers to these, with the addition, in many cases, of membership of the *Zollparlament*.

[2] *Zehn Jahre*, etc., p. 159. Treitschke's view that the coexistence of the two assemblies must gradually come to an end has never been carried into effect.

[3] Curiously enough, this view of Bismarck coincides pretty closely with that of the Guelf partisan Oscar Meding, which, however, failed to commend itself to King George V at Hanover, about 1864. See *Memoiren*, etc., vol. I, p. 343.

to modification later; and, though coming generations might see a little further into the future than either diet or Minister could at present, the venture had been made once for all.

In the matter of finance, the demand of a credit of 50 million dollars (*c.* £9,000,000), in the form of a state loan for extraordinary military and naval requirements, signed by King William at Nikolsburg, when the ultimate issue of peace negotiations was still uncertain, was granted, after a long debate in committee and *in pleno* of the diet, but only as an exceptional law. Nearly half the sum (27½ millions) was to go into the Treasury as a reserve; but the total there was not to exceed 30 millions, and so much of the whole grant as, by January 1st, 1870[1], had not been spent for extraordinary military purposes was, thereupon, to be employed towards the extinction of the public debt. Of this proposal, Bismarck, urged by an eminent economical authority, O. Michaelis—after Twesten, in a memorable speech, had denounced the permanent existence of a state treasure as irreconcileable with the principles of a parliamentary constitution—made a cabinet question; he had been besought to take part in the debate, since, without his personal influence in the Chamber—so greatly had times changed—a successful issue was more than doubtful. It was carried by 230 to 88 votes, and the *Herrenhaus* agreed on the same day. Immediately after, on September 27th, the diet had been prorogued, general military service was proclaimed for the annexed provinces, and three new army corps were formed. Together with Saxony, which would furnish a fourth, and the southern states, the treaties of offensive and defensive alliance with whom were still unpublished, this nearly doubled what had been the military strength of Prussia before Königgrätz.

But with Saxony—and, for that matter, with Saxe-Meiningen and Reuss of the Older Line[2]—Prussia was,

[1] The date will not be left unnoticed.

[2] Each of these petty complications offered materials for a drama

formally, still at war; and the peace negotiations with her neighbour took some time to settle. Bismarck had requested that no part should be taken in them by Beust, who had advised King John to return to Saxony, which he had actually approached as near as Teplitz. Hereupon, Beust sent in his resignation as Minister to his sovereign, whose grateful letter of acceptance was promptly published by its recipient in the Vienna papers. His successor, Freiherr R. von Friesen, was then sent to Berlin with an assurance such as might have been expected from King John's highmindedness, that he was ready to become a member of the North-German Confederation and to keep faith with it, but would rather abdicate than accept a position in it not befitting his princely and personal honour. But his plenipotentiaries, Friesen and Count Hohenthal, had no easy time of it at Berlin. The advice which Max Duncker had given to Bismarck to annex Hanover rather than Saxony was not wholly pleasing to King William, who would have liked to increase his dominions by at least a portion of the latter kingdom; and Bismarck vigorously repelled the efforts of Drouyn de Lhuys, whose master's good offices King John had, as a matter of fact, invoked, like the south-German Princes. The Saxon plenipotentiaries were informed that their business was not to discuss, but to agree. They were not asked for any territorial

or dramatic novel of the domestic type; but not every court could boast its Meding. After the middle of August, two companies of Prussian infantry were sent to Greiz, whose valorous Princess-regent Caroline submitted, entering the North-German Confederation and paying 100,000 dollars into the Prussian Invalids' fund. Duke Bernhard of Meiningen, after long maintaining his resolution not to resign in favour of his son and heir, was at last brought to the point by military execution, and no further conditions were exacted from the new Duke George on entering the North-German Confederation beyond the recognition of transfer of the postal system of the duchy from Prince Thurn and Taxis to Prussia.

cession; but the Saxon troops were, henceforth, to form an integral part of the Prussian army and to take the military oath to the King of Prussia, who would appoint their officers and assign to them, as he might prefer, garrison duty in Saxony or in Prussia. During Bismarck's absence in Rügen, the negotiations were carried on by Savigny in a less moderate spirit; and Friesen was confidentially informed that all would be well, if the Leipzig district were offered to Prussia. But the Saxons stood firm, and a letter from King John to King William, recalling their old friendship, had a good effect. By the middle of October, the course ran smooth, and, finally, a treaty was concluded, by which Saxony entered the North-German Confederation and promised to reorganise her troops according to the military system adopted by it. In the meantime, they were to be under the command of a Prussian general quartered in Saxony, while a Prussian garrison was placed in the fortress of Königstein and a Prusso-Saxon in Dresden. Soon afterwards, the kindly King John and the martial Crown-prince Albert visited Berlin, where cordial relations were re-established. As a mark of goodwill, the Saxon troops were, while forming a separate army corps, allowed to retain their own standards and other *insignia*, and arrangements were made as to the gradual withdrawal of the Prussian troops from Saxony. The whole episode had been of great service to the cause of German unity[1].

Thus, by the autumn of 1866, though the German south-west still remained in an attitude partly of indecision and partly of expectancy, in ignorance of the treaties which allied its Governments in offence and defence to the North-German Confederation, and though the day had not yet come for the realisation of the idea of a German kingship, which, a few months later the Prussian Crown-prince sought in vain to press upon his father, the nucleus of the German

[1] Klüpfel, *Einheitsbestrebungen*, vol. II, pp. 170–1.

empire of the future was in existence. Moreover, the federal treaty between Prussia and the lesser states, concluded on August 18th, had established the essential principles of the constitution on which the hopes of the nation were set, as formerly they had been on the *Reichsverfassung* of 1849. We shall immediately examine the way in which the principles in question were definitely worked out, and enquire whether, unlike the Frankfort National Assembly, the statesman who laid the foundations of the new national edifice, while calling into life a reconstituted Diet, and reforming, root and branch, the military constitution of the old Confederation, had preserved (so far as they remained in existence as such) the independence of the particular states and the rights of their Princes. Any such enquiry must, perforce, leave aside the states which annexation had merged in the kingdom of Prussia itself, and with regard to which the rights of the dynasties had to be ignored, while the interests of their subjects, whether or not according with their preferences, were settled by the conquering monarchy[1].

The actual conclusion of peace between Austria and Prussia took place on August 23rd, 1866. After tedious, largely financial, negotiations, which Bismarck hastened by threats to delay the Prussian disarmament, the pacification between Austria and Italy followed (October 3rd). But there remained for solution a long series of difficulties, both external and internal. For the time, Austria was no longer considered dangerous to the progress of the new Confederation, although her affairs were now under the direction of Beust. There can be no doubt that, after the catastrophe,

[1] At the same time, Ollivier (vol. VIII, p. 623), who approves of the 'liberation of Germans from Danish oppression,' goes beyond both his imperial master and the actual conditions of the problem, in asserting that the German proceedings against Denmark, far from furnishing a reason for applauding those against Frankfort, Hanover and Hesse-Cassel, show that these call for condemnation.

he had in no sense been an obstacle to the conclusion of peace, and that his resignation of his Saxon prime-ministership had been wholly in the interest of King John and his imperilled kingdom, which he had also sought to serve by his visit to Paris. We have it on his own statement, that there was no connexion whatever between the acceptance of this resignation (August 16th) and his appointment (October 30th) as Austrian Minister of Foreign Affairs; nor can his remark be gainsaid that, at all events from the point of view of maintaining the previous relations between Austria and the secondary states, he would have been far more useful in that office before 1866 than he could be after that date[1]. The wisdom of his advocacy of Benedetti's intervention at Nikolsburg, however, is, from a more general point of view, very doubtful. In any case, his last great opportunity for displaying his undoubted courage and skill had now arrived; for the task which required his chief attention at the beginning of his five years of Ministerial office was the compromise (*Ausgleich*) on which the Austro-Hungarian state depended for its endurance[2]. But it was not in his nature to concentrate his political activity upon a single purpose; and it has been well observed[3] that, after the Peace of Prague, the chief subject of Austrian diplomatic effort (and, it may be added, intrigue) was the future of the German south-west, while the North-Schleswig question was the favourite theme of France.

[1] *Memoirs of Count Beust* (Engl. tr.), vol. I, pp. 307 n. and 313.

[2] His labours to this end lie outside the range of the present narrative. He succeeded Belcredi as head of the Austrian Ministry in February 1867, the Hungarian constitution being restored and Count Julius Andrássy becoming Hungarian Minister-president. The coronation of Francis Joseph as King of Hungary at Budapest on June 8th marked the completion of the Austro-Hungarian settlement; and, in the same month, Beust was created Chancellor of the Austro-Hungarian empire, and Count.

[3] By O. Lorenz, p. 162.

In the states of the south-west forming as yet no part of the new Confederation, but, to borrow a happily applied but untranslatable term from Swiss federal life, standing in the relation of *zugewandte* communities towards it, public feeling ran its natural course. Yet it must be allowed that the prevailing antipathy to Prussia and Prussians was not wholly due to radical or clerical opinions, but was much influenced by differences of manners and habits of thought[1]. Predilection for Austria continued among the Catholic clergy and country nobility, even though the projects of *Grossdeutschtum* were vanishing into thin air; and the republican party kept up its refusal to have anything in common with military Prussia. On the other hand, the old members of the *Nationalverein*, unaware of the extent to which Bismarck's diplomacy had anticipated their designs by the secret treaties of alliance[2], now deemed the day arrived for putting into practice the policy they had long had at heart, and for preparing the union of the south-west with the North-German Confederation, if Prussia could not grant it outright. And more especially was their feeling strengthened by the conviction that the partition of Germany by the line of the Main had been a result of the French intervention invoked by Austria.

On August 27th, von der Pfordten laid before the Bavarian diet the treaty of peace with Prussia and a demand for a credit of 30 million florins. In so doing, he dwelt with satisfaction on the position of Bavaria, perfectly autonomous, but strong in the strength of the entire German nation. Von der Pfordten, while an honourable man and a patriot, had a strong imagination and was a lover of sonorous phrases, such as '*Finis Bavariæ*'; and, though anxiously

[1] On this head, the remarks of Sybel, at that time professor in Munich, are as authentic as they are candid.

[2] Cf. pp. 318 ff., *ante*.

interested in the future of Germany and desirous of furthering Prussia's hegemony of the north, had to show deference both to the old political phantom of a tripartition of Germany and to the still older particularism under the house of Wittelsbach, intensified by the self-confidence of the Napoleonic kingdom. Although adhering to Austria, Bavarian statesmanship had 'long speculated on her decrepitude[1]'; nor had Bismarck been wholly unsuccessful in keeping before von der Pfordten's eyes the notion of a Bavarian hegemony over the south-west. The Bavarian Minister had accordingly welcomed the Prussian plan of Federal reform, though he could not assent to the exclusion of Austria from the Germanic Confederation. After its break-up, there remained, it seemed to him, nothing but state-autonomy and a Prussian alliance. In the country at large, the feeling for peace had been strong; but the hatred of Prussia, fed by the fear of a Franco-Prussian bargain in the matter of the Bavarian Palatinate, had been stronger. After the great events of the War, a growing sense of impotence and isolation soon gave rise to a loud cry for peace, and, though the violent and bombastic abuse of Prussia in the ultramontane and democratic press in some measure abated, there was no desire to draw nearer to Prussia and the North-German Confederation, save on the part of some expert officers of the Bavarian army and some remnants of the *Nationalverein*. Public opinion for a time lost all self-reliance, and demanded the dismissal of the Minister who was accused of having brought about the existing coil[2]. But, before long, a change followed, and, by the end of August 1866, a compromise was brought

[1] *Memoirs and Letters of Sir Robert Morier*, vol. II, p. 79.

[2] For an instructive survey of Bavarian policy in the period covered by the present volume, see K. A. von Müller, *Bayern im Jahre* 1866 *und die Berufung des Ministeriums Hohenlohe* (*Historische Bibliothek*, vol. XX, 1909).

about between the parties in the Second Chamber; and a motion by Marquard Barth demanding a close junction between Bavaria and Prussia for the purpose of the future union of Germany, and of common resistance to foreign encroachments, was carried by an overwhelming majority (125 to 11).

But, as yet, the compliment was far from having been made good which the Baden Minister von Freydorf had paid to the Bavarians as 'better Gothaers[1]' than his own Government. In the Bavarian *Reichsrat* (Upper Chamber), the particularist Freiherr von Thüngen succeeded in docking Barth's motion of its earlier half. The solitary voice raised in favour of the junction with Prussia was that of Prince Chlodwig zu Hohenlohe-Schillingsfürst, who (before, in 1846, on succeeding to the ownership of the district from which he derived his *agnomen*, he became a hereditary member of the *Reichsrat*) had chiefly resided in Westphalia and for a short time been in the Prussian military service[2]. The future Chancellor of the German Empire was one of the few mediatised Princes who remained in close contact with the political life of the nation; and, though a cosmopolitan through his family connexions and the refined tolerance of his mind and temperament, he could, in the end, both see and will very clearly. He now declared his belief that the German nation had, at last, come to years of maturity. But von der Pfordten was still for waiting, and only four *Reichsräte* voted with the Prince. And the rise of national against particularist feeling, to which Hohenlohe had made appeal, sank again, while

[1] Cf. *ante*, vol. I, pp. 500 ff.

[2] See vol. I of his *Denkwürdigkeiten* (1907); and cf. p. 190, *ante*. In 1849, he had made a speech in which, though never heart and soul a Prussian, he had advocated acceptance of the Prussian hegemony, and which, during a period of seventeen years, shut him out from the public service of Bavaria.

von der Pfordten continued to wait. The only occasion, after the Peace, on which he came forward in German affairs was his frustration of the Prussian proposal to maintain, by means of joint matricular contributions, the formerly Federal fortresses. Thus, while the old scheme of a southern Confederation (without Austria) was neither maintained nor dropped, the decision as to the future of Bavaria remained in abeyance, or, in other words, lay in the hands of the unfortunate King Lewis II.

This Prince had been called to the throne at the age of eighteen. Badly educated, though the son of the learned Maximilian II, and untravelled, though the grandson of a royal patron almost as well known at Rome as at Munich, he had been intentionally kept back from military matters, and was without either experience or self-control. Thus, while he had a hard time before him[1], he was intent only on the gratification of his fancies, chiefly decorative and theatrical. There was a great personal charm about him, and the first year of his reign passed like a dream of bliss. Political gifts he had none, and, after a while, he tried more and more to escape from his regal duties, into which he had at first thrown himself with youthful zeal. Soon, he became difficult of access to his Ministers and Councillors, and all business with him had to be transacted circuitously through the royal Cabinet-secretary; while the King's amusements at his castles among the lakes —disguisings and devisings of theatrical scenery, midnight rides and the rest—were exaggerated by inventive rumour. The favours heaped by him upon Richard Wagner, the great musician, who, formerly a republican

[1] See the *Memoirs*, by his son, of the Minister Eduard von Bomhard (1913) which contain an interesting, and indeed touching, picture of the perplexities of King Lewis II. (Heigel's memoir of the unhappy King is avowedly apologetic.)

refugee[1], had now become a king's chosen intimate and, as some thought, his counsellor in affairs of state, had added to the public distrust of King Lewis's rule; and, by the end of 1865, he had thought it advisable to dismiss his guest. In May 1866, shortly before the outbreak of the War, he had suddenly left his kingdom for a few days, in order to pay a visit to Wagner in his Swiss retreat. But the catastrophe which followed, the losses in the field, and the dangers that gathered round his throne, could not leave him indifferent. In July, he wrote to Wagner that, if Bavaria's outward autonomy could not be preserved, he declined to remain as a shadow-king under Prussian leadership. Yet, in August, as has been seen, he consented to the secret offensive and defensive alliance concluded with Prussia under the influence of the French overtures of August 5th, which Bismarck must have made known to von der Pfordten[2]. That Minister had himself, however, entirely lost the King's confidence, and told R. von Mohl that he hardly ever saw the King, who could not abide him; while public apprehension rose to such a pitch that, in October, it was thought that the slightest provocation might lead to a repetition of the events of February 1848[3]. The controversy for and against the return of Richard Wagner was mixed up with the King's aversion from von der Pfordten and his liking for Hohenlohe, both as a *grand seigneur* and as highly approved by Wagner, though the Prince avowed himself undesirous of forming

[1] Cf. vol. I, p. 491. Wagner was allowed to revisit Germany, except Saxony, in 1861, and Saxony in 1862. In 1864 (the year in which, probably, his poem *Der Ring der Nibelungen* became known to Lewis II), he, at the King's request, settled in Munich, which he quitted in December 1865 for Switzerland. He did not move to Baireuth till 1872.

[2] Cf. Ollivier, vol. VIII, p. 571.

[3] See Oncken's *Bennigsen*, vol. II, p. 70; and cf. vol. I, pp. 357 ff., *ante*.

a Wagner Ministry. After some minor changes, and the rejection of the reactionary notion of placing Edelsheim or Dalwigk at the head of the Government, the strain of idealism, as in other crises of his reign, prevailed over all other tendencies in King Lewis's distracted mind; and, on the last day of 1866, Hohenlohe was appointed Minister of the Royal House and President of the Ministry, thus achieving a moral, if not an actual, victory for his policy.

In Württemberg, as has been seen, events ran much the same course as in Bavaria; though, notwithstanding the Russian connexion of the court, the Minister Varnbüler was more mistrustful of Prussia, and though King Charles II, through the confidential reports with which he required Major von Suckow (afterwards himself an energetic Minister of War) to furnish him behind the back of his Minister, made himself fully cognisant of the military weakness of his kingdom. The offensive and defensive alliance with Prussia had, as was seen, been concluded on August 13th; but the sturdy, if somewhat self-satisfied, consistency of the democrats had outlasted both the beginning and the end of the War, and the majority of the Chamber of Deputies continued to regard the development of constitutional freedom as Württemberg's main need, coupled with a not too onerous system of military service. Varnbüler's reply (October 10th) was partly evasive, partly vague; and, about the same time, his Government's conception of a progressive policy was shown in its treatment of the distinguished Professor Reinhold Pauli of Tübingen who, because of an article by him entitled *Württemberg and the Federal Catastrophe*, was driven into resignation of his university chair by being 'translated' to a remote seminary of secondary education[1].

[1] The article had appeared, in August, in the *Preussische Jahrbücher*; and Cultus-Minister von Golther's proceeding was commented on by Treitschke in the November number of the same

In Baden, the national spirit had manifested itself all the more vividly. Minister von Freydorf (who had succeeded the reactionary Edelsheim), when, on October 9th, submitting to the treaty of peace with Prussia, while he vigorously repelled the idea of a south-German Confederation, still cherished by Varnbüler, deprecated any immediate attempt to enter the North-German at once. The First Chamber, however, all but unanimously, agreed to the report, drawn up by Bluntschli, the celebrated writer on international law, in favour of the Second Chamber's resolution advocating the entry of the south-German States into the Northern Confederation, and added a wish (already fulfilled), that, at all events, an offensive and defensive alliance might be concluded with Prussia by Baden, and the *Zollverein* converted into a permanent union. With Hesse-Darmstadt, now bipartite, no offensive and defensive alliance had been necessary; and even the tenacious Dalwigk had to acquiesce in the inevitable.

Meanwhile, the time for summoning the *Reichstag*, whose duty it would be to agree on the constitution of the North-German Confederation, was gradually approaching; and, on November 21st, the Governments concerned were invited to send plenipotentiaries to discuss the draft. On the previous day, a Prussian Ministerial decree had introduced into the new dominions of the Crown all existing Prussian regulations as to freedom of settlement (*Freizügigkeit*) and of exercise of trades and handicrafts (*Gewerbefreiheit*); but the cohesion of the whole depended on the goodwill of the parts, and, even in Prussia, and in the Prussian *Landtag* in particular, the old quarrels had left marked traces behind them. The foundation of a 'new fraction of the national party,' brought about by the disruption of the Liberals so far back as September, was followed, in

journal, in an article reprinted in *Zehn Jahre deutscher Kämpfe*, pp. 163 ff.

December, by a pronouncement on the part of its 24 members, under the leadership of Hennig, Twesten and Unruh; and, while the general support of the National-Liberals, as they henceforth formally called themselves, was thus assured to the Government, it was mainly at the expense of the *Fortschritt*, of whom 15 had joined this new fraction. But the *Fortschritt* had no intention of allowing themselves to be extinguished, and, as against the Government, could always count on the support of the permanent malcontents. Thus, when the Government proposed to the *Landtag*, which had reassembled on November 12th, the dotation with a million-and-a-half dollars (£225,000) of six generals (including Moltke and Roon) who had rendered conspicuous services in the recent war, and when the list was brought before the house with the name of Bismarck spontaneously added by its committee, Hoverbeck, Virchow and other members of the *Fortschritt* moved, as an amendment, that the names of Bismarck and Roon should be omitted, because, as Hoverbeck bluntly put it, these Ministers had not deserved such rewards. A majority of 219 against 80, however, approved the proposal of the committee without debate and added an expression of the national gratitude[1]. Yet, in the debate on the budget, even the Liberals of the new fraction, while granting the sum demanded, agreed to the principle that the peace strength of the army must be fixed, not by royal ordinance, but with the consent of the diet.

As to the annexed lands, Bismarck had at first thought of reorganising the whole political system of the Prussian monarchy in four great provinces; but representations from the new parts of the state induced him to abandon so fallacious an appeal to medieval ideas. He now, as in general throughout his greatest, or constructive, period of statesmanship, resolved on demanding only what was necessary

[1] Roon, *Denkwürdigkeiten*, vol. II, pp. 503 ff.

for the accomplishment of his main purpose. In Nassau and Electoral Hesse, the eradication of directly hostile feeling proceeded without much difficulty, though with the dubious aid of personal changes in the civil service and the judiciary, unscrupulously effected by the Ministers of the Interior and of Justice (Counts von Eulenburg and zur Lippe). Duke Adolphus of Nassau, it may be added, on September 18th, concluded a treaty whereby he renounced his claims to the throne, receiving in return a compensation of 16 million florins (*c.* £2,120,000), together with certain estates in the annexed duchy, the palace of Biberich among them. In Hesse-Cassel, a strong desire showed itself to maintain a measure of state autonomy, in the judicial and certain other branches of administration: the Hessians were proud of having given proof that 'there were judges at Cassel' as well as at Berlin. But root-and-branch resistance commended itself only where the influence of Hassenpflug and Vilmar had formerly been paramount among the country clergy, to whom Mühler was very long-suffering. The Elector Frederick William had, in order to secure the retention of his private property, lost no time in relieving his former subjects of their oath of allegiance, and had now withdrawn to his Bohemian estates[1]. He could not (like his father before him) seek refuge at Frankfort, where the indignation excited by Prussia's exactions still smouldered under the ashes of an overthrown self-government, more especially among what had hitherto been the privileged classes, the senatorial families and their kin, some of whom emigrated rather than allow their sons to become liable to Prussian military service. In Schleswig-Holstein, on the other hand, absolute tranquillity prevailed, though the large majority of the

[1] In February 1868, he issued an appeal denouncing Bismarck and admonishing all Electoral-Hessians to hold themselves in readiness for an imminent foreign intervention.

population adhered to the Augustenburg cause, even after Duke Frederick had considerately relieved all his lieges of the obligations into which they had entered towards him.

The most difficult of the annexed provinces to bring into line with the rest was Hanover, where only a small part of the population had been in favour of annexation; and even the leaders of the former Opposition, Bennigsen in particular, only with difficulty reconciled themselves to so drastic a change. The bulk of the nobility resisted it on legitimist principles, and 'boycotted' Bennigsen, whose political action they had always resented, as if he had been responsible for a consummation which he had sought to avert. Gradually, the accomplished fact began to be more widely accepted; although efforts, in which Bennigsen, Miquel and other *Nationalverein* politicians took part, were made to preserve what could be preserved of the institutions proper to the Hanoverian kingdom. On October 1st, a numerous assembly of notables urged the Prussian Government to summon from the annexed kingdom 'men of confidence' for consultation on the subject of necessary reforms. But something like half the population were dominated by hatred of Prussia, sympathy with the unyielding blind King George V and loyalty towards the traditional thousand years' connexion with the house of Guelf[1], together with the interests of the nobility and of the city of Hanover, the fears of the orthodox Lutheran clergy (who had no liking for the more liberal tendencies of the Prussian United Church) and the prejudices of their Ultramontane brethren. All these motives favoured the appeals of King George, in which the proceedings of Prussia were held up to the execration of the civilised world; and the loyal feelings of a considerable proportion of the officers and soldiers, who

[1] See Meding, part II, pp. 209 ff., as to the plan of Count Münster and some of the nobility to induce King George to abdicate in favour of his son.

remembered with pride the day of Langensalza, found an echo among the peasantry. Associations were formed in different parts of the country for a general rising; and this preliminary organisation, to which influential noblemen offered their support, profited from the fact that nearly the whole civil administration had, on promise of obedience, been left untouched by the Prussian Government. The object of the design was simply to hold ready a Hanoverian military force for the time of action, and there were no demonstrations beyond pilgrimages to Herrenhausen and to the Marienburg near Hildesheim, where Queen Mary lingered by her consort's orders. The King himself, following Platen's dubious advice, had proceeded to Vienna, and set up house in the 'Villa Brunswick' at Hietzing. Hither an address followed him with a protest signed on November 7th by 110 members of the *Ritterschaften* against unwarranted constitutional changes. Hereupon, though orders were given to the Prussian Governor-General, von Voigts-Rhetz, to proceed gently, and even the press was left untouched, street disturbances and insults against Prussian soldiers were of frequent occurrence. On December 3rd, the Governor-General was ordered to suspend every official on whose thorough cooperation he could not count, or who had signed the November declaration, while a large number of officers military and civil who had mixed themselves up with the agitation were sent to the fortress of Minden. Necessarily, the organisation of the new army corps, which elsewhere proceeded without obstacles, met with difficulties in Hanover, until, at last, King George relieved officers and men of his former army from their military oath; whereupon, 425 officers entered the Prussian army, and 83 those of small states, only 81 holding aloof from new service.

It may be noted at once[1] that, in the elections for the

[1] As to subsequent transactions, see the first, and more particularly the second, chapters of vol. II of Oncken's *Bennigsen*. For

first North-German *Reichstag*, Bennigsen and the National-Liberals in Hanover upheld allegiance to the King of Prussia as now a plain duty, and were joined by men of views very different from theirs, such as Count George Münster, whose father had formerly rendered high services to the restored kingdom of Hanover. The result showed the Hanoverian electoral body to be all but equally divided in opinion—about 144,000 nationalists to about 130,000 Guelfites. The process of administrative reorganisation was slow and much mismanaged, and it was not till the beginning of July 1867 that the long-desired 'men of confidence,' selected partly with Bennigsen's aid, were summoned to Berlin to expedite it by their advice and to accommodate it, in a measure, to Hanoverian opinion. The Prussian Crown-prince, always on the side of conciliation, took a warm interest in their endeavours, and sought to calm the irritation excited by a supposed insult to Queen Mary, who, about the same time (July 1867) was driven from the Marienburg by the demand that she should change her household for one of Prussian choosing[1]. Most of the counsels of the 'men of confidence' were accepted by the Government; and in the elections of August 1867 for the *Reichstag*, the Guelfs could not secure more than four seats. In the following December, the whole question of the reorganisation of Hanoverian administration gave rise to a series of important debates, in which Bennigsen did his best to preserve as much as possible of the former institutions of Hanover, and, in particular, to secure to the new province, in accordance with the promise of the Prussian Government to the Hanoverian provisional diet, an annual grant of half a million dollars for definite purposes of its own (*Hannover'scher Provinzialfonds*). This

the other side, see the interesting, though long-winded, reminiscences of Meding, vols. II and III.

[1] See Oncken's *Bennigsen*, vol. III, pp. 295 ff.

proposal, which opened the whole question for and against centralisation, acquired great political significance, as proving highly offensive to old-Prussian conservatism, while self-government and decentralisation on the English model had, largely through the teaching of Gneist, for some time been a cherished principle of advanced German Liberalism. It was ultimately (February 7th, 1868) carried by 200 to 168 votes, but with the result of estranging the bulk of the Conservative party for a time from Bismarck[1].

Meanwhile, the 'Guelfic' agitation in Hanover had under military influence continued during the earlier months of 1867 among the peasantry; and the rumours of war which, as we shall see, filled the air about this time, led to the spread of a belief that, on the outbreak of hostilities, King George V would appear in Holland, to drive out the

[1] With regard to the property of the Hanoverian Crown, an arrangement had been made, with the aid of British good offices, in September 1867, by which King George, on returning the 23 million dollars carried off to England at the outbreak of the war, was, in lieu of his former civil list of 400,000 dollars (*c.* £58,000) derived from the Hanoverian domains, to receive an annual income of 700,000 dollars (*c.* £102,000), the capital being judicially deposited. (This was exclusive of his very considerable private property invested in England and variously estimated.) The arrangement had, at first, been made conditional on his renouncing the rights to the Hanoverian throne which he had hitherto continued to assert. (See *Diplomatic Reminiscences of Lord Augustus Loftus*, 2nd series, vol. I, pp. 142 ff.) When he demurred to this condition, Bismarck let it drop; and the agreement was, in spite of much opposition, carried in the Prussian Chamber by a large majority (February 1868). But, in the same month, a great Guelfic demonstration on the occasion of King George's silver wedding led to the renewed sequestration of the property of the House of Guelf. Inasmuch as King George continued to spend large sums on his designs for the recovery of his throne, and more especially on the Guelfic Legion mentioned in the text, the sequestrated income was by Bismarck, with the approval of the Prussian *Landtag*, applied to the discovery and prevention of these operations.

Prussians from his kingdom with French aid. At Hietzing, it was expected that a force of 20,000 faithful Hanoverians would be in readiness, and arms and scarlet uniforms were ordered. King George V's political agent-in-chief, *Regierungsrat* Meding, now at Paris, glibly gave out that the moment was near at hand; and, at the beginning of May, about seven hundred Hanoverians assembled at Arnhem, who called themselves the Guelfic Legion (*Welfenlegion*). When the political storm had blown over, and they were obliged to quit Holland, the legionaries were taken to Switzerland, and thence to France (January 1868). Here, they were, with polite assurances to the Prussian Government in reply to its protest, distributed, at a distance from the frontier, in small bodies modelled on the old Hanoverian regiments, but unarmed. Some local disturbances followed; but, after further vicissitudes, the Guelfic Legion or its remnant was, in March 1870, disbanded by King George V, a financial crash having nearly overwhelmed the unhappy King, who, like a Stewart pretender, expelled from his banished court his most valuable agents, including the indefatigable Meding. The officers of the Guelfic Legion were pensioned off—by Bismarck's orders[1].

The task of supreme moment that awaited the meeting of the North-German *Reichstag* was the settlement of the future constitution of the North-German Confederation. Drafts had been prepared by *Geheimrat* Hepke, Max Duncker and Lothar Bucher (the converted radical who plays an important part in the confidential business of these years), and revised by Bismarck, who, so early as October 30th, in his retirement at Putbus began to dictate

[1] Bismarck cynically accounts for the breakdown of King George V's long-cherished scheme by the statement, that he was himself in receipt of full information as to the enterprise from persons in Hanover bribed by him to frustrate it. Cf. *Gedanken und Erinnerungen*, vol. II, pp. 75–6.

instructions, insisting on the preservation of a federal character in the projected union—i.e. of so much of autonomy as could be left to the particular states confederated with Prussia. Then, on December 13th, he dictated to Bucher the substance of the most important chapters of the final draft, dealing with *Bundesrat*, Presidency and *Reichstag*; Bucher and Delbrück elaborated the whole; on the 14th, it was approved by a Ministerial Council, and, on the 15th, laid before the assembled plenipotentiaries of the Confederated Governments[1]. A number of amendments were suggested, among which the most important was the query of the Oldenburg plenipotentiary, with whom the Saxe-Coburger was in accord, whether the popular representative body ought not to be supplemented by an upper house of Princes: he also desiderated the formal institution of a Federal Minister, and certain other additions to the draft. The Prussian Government, however, desirous above all of presenting a united front towards the quarter where the Luxemburg cloud was already looming on the horizon, expedited the proceedings of the conference; so that, after it had declared its acceptance of eighteen amendments and rejected all the rest, the draft to be laid before the *Reichstag*

[1] Compare, with Sybel's narrative, the probably authentic details in Keudell, *Bismarck et sa Famille* (Fr. tr.), pp. 297 ff. With Sybel's general account of the transactions preliminary to and in the *Reichstag*, and of their results, in chapters I, II and IV of his sixth volume, should be compared the briefer statement in Klüpfel, *Einheitsbestrebungen*, vol. II, pp. 168 ff., and chapter VIII (*Die Gründung des norddeutschen Bundes*) in Hermann Schulze's standard *Einleitung*, etc. (see bibliography). See also the section *Der Norddeutsche Bund* in Ottokar Lorenz, *Kaiser Wilhelm u. die Begründung des Reichs*, 1866–1871, pp. 96–120. For a contemporary criticism see Treitschke, *Zehn Jahre*, etc., pp. 175 ff., and, from a different point of view, Sir Robert Morier's extremely able *Memorandum*, drawn up for Lord Stanley and annotated by E. von Stockmar, in Morier's *Memoirs*, vol. II, pp. 111–125.

was settled by the beginning of February. On the 24th of the month that assembly was opened at Berlin. In the course of the same weeks, the transfer of the Thurn and Taxis posts to Prussia, as from July 1st, 1867, was accomplished; and, six months later, thanks largely to the great organising powers of *Geheimrat* von Stephan, afterwards famous as Postmaster-general of the German Empire, the postal administration in the entire North-German Confederation passed into the hands of the Federal Government.

The elections to the *Reichstag*, quietly conducted, had produced a house corresponding in its composition, in the main, to the last Prussian *Landtag*, though rather more favourable, even in Hanover, to the Government and its national policy. The National-Liberals, the largest single fraction in the house (79 members), practically had the decision in their hands; their support was becoming of great value to Bismarck, and was indispensable, whenever he could not carry the conservatives with him. The choice of officers —the worthy Simson, who had signed the *Reichsverfassung* in 1849, being elected President, and the Free-conservative Duke of Ujest and the National-Liberal leader Bennigsen Vice-presidents—showed that neither side of the house had a definite majority.

The ensuing debates on the whole exhibited a breadth and an ability not inferior to those displayed by the United States' Convention of 1787. But the problem to be solved—that of combining a federal system which, in spite of unavoidable concessions to the principle of unity, respected the sovereignty of the confederated states, with the hegemony of one of them—was hardly less difficult than that which the assembly of 1848–9 had set itself, of subordinating two Great Powers to a Central Authority of its own creation. Hence, the need of both a strong will and a politic flexibility of action to bring the whole to a practical and fairly acceptable issue, and to build up a constitution promising

to secure so much of unity as was necessary to its endurance and development, and so much of liberty as seemed compatible with cohesion.

Bismarck's admonition, in laying the draft constitution before the *Reichstag* on March 4th, 1867, that without dispatch everything must go to pieces, seemed, notwithstanding the support of G. von Vincke, to meet with no adequate response, till, five days later, the general preliminary discussion began. It was opened by the National-Liberal Twesten in an important speech, free from all doctrinairism and demanding enough elasticity in the constitution to allow of the ultimate admission of the southern states. But, at the same time, he pointed to the cardinal defect of the draft—the absence of provision for the due participation of parliament in the government of the Confederation. Ministerial responsibility was, he allowed, impossible in the present case; then, let parliament be assured its requisite influence by means of its taxing power, and, though for a limited series of years it might suffice to make a definite grant for a standing army of fixed size, let the *Reichstag* afterwards resume its full budget-right. After Waldeck had given voice to the uncompromising demands of the *Fortschritt*, Miquel followed in much the same strain as Twesten, but without making his acceptance of the draft conditional upon the Government's concurrence in his point of view, or pressing for the immediate introduction of an imperial tax, the indispensable sign of the unity of the Confederation. Of the other speeches at this stage, perhaps the most effective was that of Eduard Lasker, who made his mark by it, and whose intellectual grasp and legal acumen soon established him as the leading spirit of the National-Liberal party. He insisted on provision being made for securing, with a view to the future admission of the southern states, the permanent preponderance of Prussia in the Confederation. Bismarck, in his general

reply, disclaimed any intention on the part of the Government either to square the circle or to convert a federation of twenty-one Governments into a constitutional monarchy with a responsible Ministry. He waved aside the supposition that the Prussian, any more than any other, *Landtag* could reject a constitution agreed upon by the representatives of thirty million Germans as the achievement of a tremendous war; on the other hand, he denied that there was any objection on the part of the Governments to the growth of freedom, or to the grant of demands compatible with the national security at the present or any future time. Thus, on March 18th, the Government entered on the successive discussion of the several articles of the draft in no uncompromising or irreconcileable mood, and in obedience to the word of command given out by its head, who was aware that everything in Germany's foreign relations and home condition depended on a united front, and who had the secret treaties between Prussia and the southern states in his keeping: 'Let us put Germany in the saddle—there is no fear of her not knowing how to ride.'

Article I[1], dealing with the extent and limits of the new Confederation, formally excluded from these both Austria and 'the royal Netherlands' territories. That the latter term referred not only to the duchy of Limburg (which was under the same constitution as the kingdom of Holland), but also to the grand-duchy of Luxemburg, which was in merely personal union with the Dutch Crown, could hardly be considered doubtful, after Bismarck's emphatic declaration that Prussia had never demanded or desired anything likely to interfere with the independence of the Netherlands. But he was further pressed on the subject of the dangers which the German land of Luxemburg

[1] In the summary which follows the articles of the constitution are enumerated in the order finally settled, which is not always, as with Article I, that of the draft.

was running from a powerful neighbour, and of alliances which might be formed by the southern states prejudicial to the security of Germany at large. Only a few days earlier, on March 14th, in the Legislative Body at Paris, Thiers had opposed the new French military law, on the ground that it would be a mistake to seek at this moment to demolish by force of arms the power of Prussia; but everything, he had continued, depended on preventing its further advance; and a strong anti-Prussian feeling had manifested itself in the French Chamber, where the Government commanded a majority. Bismarck's reply on this head was one of the most characteristic acts of his political career: on March 19th he published the treaties of offensive and defensive alliance secretly concluded[1] with Bavaria, Württemberg and Baden—a step which he had been urged by Hohenlohe to take. (When informing Benedetti, shortly before, of their existence, he had found them to be not unknown to French diplomacy.) For the rest, Article I passed without difficulty, Bismarck taking occasion to denounce as fantastic the restoration of Poland, and, in reply to the demand of a North-Schleswig deputy, stating that the northern frontier of the Confederation could not be settled till after the inhabitants of the doubtful districts had, within limits to be fixed by Prussia, been consulted, in accordance with the provision of the Peace of Prague. The Emperor of Austria alone, he said, had the right to demand the execution of this clause. Article II provided that Federal laws should have precedence over laws of particular states belonging to the Confederation; and Article III established a common indigenate in the whole of the Federal territory. Article IV defined the matters subject to the supervision and legislation of the Confederation, which, in the draft, were restricted to trade, communications and material interests generally. On this, Schulze-Delitzsch moved the appointment of a

[1] Cf. pp. 318 ff., *ante*.

committee to draw up the *Grundrechte* (fundamental rights) belonging to all Germans; but the experience of 1848, when the discussion on this head occupied the better part of two months[1], was unforgotten, and the proposal was negatived, though only by the narrow majority of 130 to 128. In the minority were the Catholics, who desired that the rights and liberties of their church should be safeguarded in the Federal constitution. Among other amendments for extending the competence of the Federal authority, Miquel's, which proposed to commit civil legislation in its entirety to the Confederation, was rejected; but Twesten's important motion, subjecting to it all military and naval affairs, was carried by a large majority.

Of the greatest moment was Article V, together with Articles XI–XIX. Article V, in its ultimate form, provided that Federal legislation was to be in the hands of the *Bundesrat* and the *Reichstag*. For the passing of a Federal law, an agreement between the majorities of these two bodies was declared to be requisite and sufficient. Controversies concerning army or navy were to be decided by the Federal Presidency, if it pronounced in favour of the maintenance of existing arrangements. Article XI declared that the Federal Presidency appertained to the Prussian Crown, to which it fell to represent the Confederation internationally, to declare war and conclude peace in its name, to enter into alliances and other treaties with foreign states and to appoint, accredit and receive ambassadors. So far as such treaties came within the sphere of Federal legislation, they were to require for their conclusion the assent of the *Bundesrat*, and could not become valid without the approval of the *Reichstag*. The Presidency was to summon, open, adjourn and dissolve the *Reichstag*, which was, however, at no time to be summoned without the *Bundesrat*. In the latter, the

[1] Cf. vol. I, p. 477, *ante*.

chairmanship and the conduct of business were to appertain to the Federal Chancellor. He was to be nominated by the Presidency, which was to lay all resolutions of the *Bundesrat* before the *Reichstag*, where it would be represented by members of the *Bundesrat* or by special commissioners named by it. The Presidency was to publish and supervise the execution of Federal laws; and its ordinances and decrees were to be issued in the name of the Confederation by the Federal Chancellor, who thereby undertook the responsibility for them. If members of the Confederation failed to meet their constitutional obligations, the execution against them, which might extend to sequestration of the territory in question and of its government, was to be decreed by the *Bundesrat* and, in urgent cases, ordered and carried out at once by the Federal Commander-in-chief.

The matters and relations dealt with in these provisions involved considerations of the utmost importance for both the principles and the working of the constitution, and no portions of the draft were more anxiously discussed. The intention had, obviously, been that the supreme authority in the Confederation should really lie with the *Bundesrat*, and that, though the power of the Presidency should everywhere assert itself, the effective cooperation of the *Bundesrat* should never be absent. Thus, regard was to be had alike to the Prussian hegemony and to the rights of the particular states; while the *Reichstag*, in representing the Confederation at large, was to act both as a legislative factor and as an organ of public opinion. Now, in such a federal system of government, there was no place for a Ministry responsible in the legal sense; nor had the conservatives in the assembly any desire that provision should be made for it; but they were quite content with the committees for the several departments of the administration which, according to another article[1], were to be

[1] Art. VIII in the constitution, as finally settled.

nominated by the *Bundesrat*. The democrats, however, held a directly contrary opinion; and Schulze-Delitzsch accordingly proposed, while doing away with the committees of the *Bundesrat*, to substitute a clause declaring that the executive authority in Federal affairs was to be exercised through responsible Ministers, by one of whom every Government ordinance must be signed. Waldeck contended that, without this change, the new Confederation would be nothing but a continuation of the old. On behalf of the National-Liberals, who were much impressed by a speech of the Hanoverian Planck, a high legal authority, Bennigsen, moved, as an addition to the article providing for the appointment of a Federal Chancellor by the Federal Council, that it should also appoint responsible departmental commissioners. But Bismarck roundly resisted all proposals involving a divided responsibility; with the result that, in the end, after the democratic proposal had been rejected, the article providing for the appointment of a Chancellor, with Bennigsen's addition, met the same fate—though only by a single vote (128 to 127). It was, however, brought up again by the Free-conservative leader Count Bethusy-Huc, and carried by a good majority without Bennigsen's addition; but, in the article requiring for the ordinances of the Presidency the counter-signature of the Chancellor, he secured the insertion of the words 'who thereby undertakes the responsibility for them.' Thus, the Federal Chancellor, and he alone, was to be the responsible officer of the new Confederation.

Next came the almost equally important Articles (XX–XXXII) which had reference to the *Reichstag*. The draft had assumed the system of universal suffrage and direct election; and this was upheld by Bismarck, in accordance with his proposals of 1863 and 1866[1], without

[1] *Ante*, pp. 87 and 101 n., and p. 235.

enthusiasm, but as preferable to any other electoral system with which he was acquainted, and, certainly, to the 'senseless and miserable' three-classes system of the Prussian constitution, which Sybel had desired to see adopted in its place. Fries's proposal to add secret election (ballot) was opposed by Windthorst and rejected; another, to substitute household suffrage, met with little or no support; and Zachariae's (of Göttingen) motion for the introduction of an upper house, which Bismarck deprecated rather than contravened, likewise fell to the ground. Finally, the exclusion of state officials from the *Reichstag*, proposed in the draft, was very generally disapproved—no wonder, if Windthorst's calculation was correct, that 190 such were sitting in the present assembly. On the whole, the *Reichstag* had proved rather more Liberal than the Government, although the conclusion of the conservative Wagener probably represented the prevalent feeling of the House that, universal suffrage having once been introduced, there was little use in going back from it. The duration of the legislative period of the *Reichstag* was fixed at three years, as proposed in the draft, and not at five, as the conservatives desired; and Lasker's motion that no legal responsibility should attach to veracious reports of the *Reichstag* debates was carried by a large majority. Finally, the National-Liberals, after a lively debate, succeeded, by a vote of 136 to 130, in carrying, against the provision of the draft, their proposal for the payment of members; but, in accordance with a statement by Bismarck, the addition was afterwards struck out by the *Bundesrat*.

In one of the Articles on Customs and Commerce (XXXIII–XL), the three Free Hanse towns were, as free ports, left outside the common customs boundaries, in accordance with a policy which, as Treitschke indignantly noted, was carried so far by a Hanseatic statesman in the *Reichstag* as to make him declare that a strong German navy

would only endanger German trade. The Articles on railways, posts and telegraphs (XLI–LII), likewise, including the Federal right of laying down military railway-lines, were passed unaltered. Among the provisions as to navy and navigation, and the consular system (Articles LIII–LVI), were those declaring the harbours of Kiel and the Jahde Federal harbours of war; charging the Federal exchequer with the costs of constructing and maintaining the navy[1], and placing the entire consular system when fully organised, under purely Federal control.

Of supreme importance, of course, were the proposals as to the military system of the Confederation (which took their final form as Articles LVII–LXVIII of its constitution); and here, in Sybel's words, a storm arose which had almost wrecked the vessel in sight of port. The debate lasted for a week, turning, first, on the old question of the length of military service, with regard to which, as part of the military reorganisation achieved by Prussia, and now to be adopted by the Confederation, the sanction of the *Reichstag* was asked by the Confederate Governments. The draft provided for general military service (from the completed twentieth year of age) without the admissibility of substitutes, to extend over seven years in the line—three of these, as was added after debate, with the colours and four in the reserve—and five in the *Landwehr*. For the next ten years, the peace strength of the army was to be fixed at one per cent. of the population of 1867. When discussing the length of service, Waldeck asserted that what was needed was not a standing army, but a people's army; while Moltke declared that three years were indispensable for efficiency, and that, from the economic point of view, no state could be productive that was not

[1] In this connexion, it was resolved (Art. LV) that the flag of the mercantile navy and of the ships of war should be black-white-and-red, which significant combination thus became the official colours of the Confederation.

secure. In the matter of the numbers of the army, and the maintenance of the cherished budget-right involved, the *Fortschritt* vehemently denounced the National-Liberals, should they give way to the Government; but they firmly maintained their policy, and Forckenbeck's motion that the Government demands should be adopted—but for a period of four years only (to December 31st, 1871)—and that, after the completion of the military organisation, the Federal Presidency should propose to *Bundesrat* and *Reichstag* a comprehensive military law, was carried by a majority of more than 30 votes. G. von Vincke, Gneist, Lasker, Miquel and others had taken part in the debate, and the Prussian Minister of War, Roon, had intervened with the remark, that he regarded the temporary 225 dollars *per annum* (under £33) for each soldier in the light of a *minimum* grant, and reserved to himself the right of demanding an augmentation of it from the *Reichstag*.

Under the head of Federal Finance (Articles LXIX–LXXIII), Miquel had the satisfaction of securing the provision that a complete budget of income and expenditure must be presented before the beginning of each financial year, and passed into law. Under that of Settlement of Disputes, etc. (Articles LXXIV–LXXVII) the necessity of a Federal Tribunal, in accordance with the proposals of the old Federal Diet in 1834, of the *Reichsverfassung* of 1849, of the Prussian scheme of Union of the same year and of the Austrian design of 1863, was strongly insisted on by Wächter and other eminent jurists; but no enduring arrangement was made, and, though the *Bundesrat* was empowered to intervene in cases of denial of justice in any particular state, a gap was here left in the constitutional system of the Confederation. The general Article (LXXVIII) demanding, on proposed constitutional changes, a two-thirds' majority in the *Bundesrat*, was virtually unopposed, except by Zachariae, who had advocated unanimity.

The final portion of the draft (to which the concluding Article LXXIX of the actual constitution corresponds) was brought up for deliberation on April 10th. It differed from the rest in having a special, instead of a general, purpose, and dealing with a future eventuality, rather than with an existing condition of things. Yet the relations of the southern states to the North-German Confederation had, from the opening of the *Reichstag*, been perhaps more in the minds of members than any other question, unless it were the eternal military budget. At an early stage of the debates, it had been repeatedly urged that the hope of an early admission of the southern states into the new Confederation should be more distinctly expressed, and the conditions under which it should take place more clearly formulated. On April 9th, Count Solms-Laubach had enquired why the two southern provinces of the grand-duchy of Hesse, Starkenburg (between Rhine and Main, with the capital Darmstadt) and Rhenish Hesse, should not, like Upper Hesse, be admitted into the North-German Confederation. Bismarck, who had previously shown himself well-disposed to such a measure, to which he knew the Grand-duke and his stiff-necked Minister Dalwigk to be adverse, replied that he was only waiting for a statement of the wishes of the grand-ducal Government; whereupon its Federal Commissioner offered a half-promise, which, however, in spite of a favourable vote of the Darmstadt Second Chamber, came to nothing. The more general question, whether proposals for the extension of the Confederation were to require the assent of *Bundesrat* and *Reichstag*, gave rise to much difference of opinion. Bismarck expressed himself more or less indifferent whether admission of the southern states should take place after the transition stage of a south-German confederation had been passed through, or, if Austria consented, without any further ado[1]. After he had

[1] Yet Bebel (who sat in the *Reichstag*, without as yet choosing to

stated that the article concerning the relations of the North-German Confederation to the south-German states was not contrary to the wishes of the confederated Governments, it was passed with an addition, proposed by Miquel and Lasker, providing that the entrance of the south-German states, or of any one of them, should take place, on the proposal of the Federal Presidency, by means of Federal legislation.

The constitution bill was, hereupon, read a second time and approved by the Governments, on the understanding that two vehemently debated articles should be included in the form which commended itself to them. These were the article concerning the payment of members, and that providing the financial basis for the military arrangements. When Bismarck, on April 15th, reported to the *Reichstag* in this sense, the results, already noted, were secured, in the former case, mainly through the exertions of Bennigsen, by a majority of 178 to 90 votes; and in the latter, thanks to the conciliatory action of the same statesman, in conjunction with the Duke of Ujest, by a majority of 202 to 80. The minority consisted of an odd mixture of conservatives, democrats, ultramontanes, particularists, Poles and—Bismarck. But he had declined to state that the proposed compromise would be unacceptable to the Governments. The entire constitution was, hereupon, passed by a vote of 230 against 53; and, on April 17th, Bismarck announced that the confederated Governments had, in their turn, signified their acceptance of it. On the same day, the *Reichstag* was dissolved, with a royal speech expressing the hope that the product of its labours would prove a guarantee of peace. Of the diets of the several states, none (though Prussia and Mecklenburg had reserved their right of granting or refusing it) refused its assent.

call himself a socialist) drew the conclusion that Bismarck did not desire the admission of the south-German states. See also Lorenz, pp. 116 ff.

Although we may smile at Treitschke's contemporary boast that the constitution of the North-German Confederation proved the Germans to be no longer, as in the Frankfort days, a mere people of professors, we cannot gainsay his assertion that this constitution marked the greatest measure of political progress which the nation had hitherto accomplished. Some of its features were, no doubt, anomalies in a federal constitution. Such, above all, were the virtually irresistible preponderance of Prussia, and the concentration of all moral as well as, nominally, all legal Ministerial responsibility in the single person of the Federal Chancellor, who, as Bismarck and the Prussian Ministry alike perceived, could be no one else than the presiding Prussian Minister and director of foreign affairs. Other features must be accounted imperfections in any constitution based on the principle of popular representation as one of its legislative elements. But, in both respects, nothing could have been made clearer by the chief builder of the work than the fact that the constitution, elastic and capable of accommodation, was like the Confederation for whose purposes it was built, not only capable of, but intended for, future development. And, with regard to that development, the constitution itself must largely help to bridge the Main.

In this busy year 1867, when harvest and seedtime as it were coincided, there was, as Bennigsen repeatedly wrote to his wife, no rest for a politician in the midst of affairs. Nor was it in Berlin alone a time of constructive debate. In Bavaria, as has been seen, Prince Hohenlohe had at last assumed the conduct of affairs; but he was resolved to walk warily. By his advice, the advanced Liberals in the Chamber withdrew a motion for the entrance of Bavaria into the North-German Confederation; and, early in May, Bavaria and Württemberg concluded an agreement for

joint negotiation with the North-German Confederation on the basis, not of admission of the south-western states into it, but of a wider league between it and the southern states under a *Bundesrat* presided over by Prussia. An alliance between this wider league and Austria, now or later, was to be kept in view. This proposed compromise, which met with no encouragement at Vienna, Bismarck promptly announced (to Baden) his intention of declining, and it fell stillborn[1]. Meanwhile, Hohenlohe had lost no time in setting on foot the reforms which formed part of his programme of action. In the first instance, the Ministers of War of Bavaria, Württemberg, Baden and Hesse-Darmstadt met at Stuttgart, on February 3rd, to arrange for the reorganisation of their military forces on the Prussian model; and, no sooner had the constitution of the North-German Confederation been, to all intents and purposes, settled than, on June 3rd, a conference was, on Bismarck's invitation, opened at Berlin on the subject of the renewal of the *Zollverein*, which was attended by Hohenlohe and Varnbüler (who had previously met at Nördlingen), as well as by Freydorf and Dalwigk. In the treaties of peace with the southern states, the Prussian Government had consented to the provisional continuance of the *Zollverein* and of their inclusion in it; but, manifestly, they could not be sure of the permanency of this arrangement; and this uncertainty was a great disadvantage to their trade and industries. After some hesitation on the part of Bavaria, which in the later stages of the negotiations was represented by Count Tauffkirchen, a definitive treaty was, on July 8th, concluded between the four Governments and the North-German Confederation, on the basis—which Bismarck had from the first had in view—of conferences between deputies of the southern states with *Reichstag* and *Bundesrat*, under Prussian presidency. These representative conferences were to bear the name of

[1] O. Lorenz, pp. 131 ff.

Customs-parliament (*Zollparlament*), and the treaty constituting it was to come into operation on January 1st, 1868. The Customs-*Bundesrat* was to consist of fifty-eight members, of whom Bavaria was to name six, Württemberg four, Baden and Hesse-Darmstadt three each, and to appoint committees dealing respectively with customs and taxes, trade and communications, and accounts. The Customs-parliament was to be elected on the same lines as the *Reichstag*.

Not only the Baden Minister Mathy, who himself took part in the preliminary deliberations, but other members of the national party in the southern states, who assembled at Stuttgart on August 4th to give utterance to their views, regarded the proposed *Zollparlament* as a desirable advance on Article IV of the Peace of Prague. By this article, it will be remembered, Austria had, besides promising to acknowledge the Confederation about to be established by Prussia north of the Main, consented to the formation of a union (*Verein*) among the states south of this line, of which union the connexion (*Verbindung*) with the Northern Confederation was to be reserved for a more special agreement. The article, it is clear, neither forced the southern states to establish a Confederation among them, nor obliged the two Great Powers to bring it about, although it bound them not to prevent it. On the other hand, was Prussia required to decline the admission of the southern states into the North-German Confederation? The Prussian Government resolved, as Bismarck afterwards declared in his circular dispatch of September 7th, 1867, to the European Governments, not to take advantage of the opportunity offered by the *Zollverein* negotiations, and to content itself with the Treaty of July 8th. For the rest, he stated that the North-German Confederation was at all times ready to meet the southern Governments in extending and confirming its relations with them, but that they must be left to determine for themselves the steps in the process.

This was the standpoint taken up by Bismarck, when, on September 10th, he met the first ordinary *Reichstag*. The majority was favourable to the Government, and not much notice was taken of the fact that the minority, for the first time, included an avowed Socialist fraction—consisting of Bebel, Liebknecht, von Schweitzer of Frankfort, and one or two others. Bismarck had, on July 14th, become Chancellor of the Confederation; and, under him, Rudolf Delbrück had, much to the dissatisfaction of the conservatives, been appointed President of the Federal Chancery, established on August 12th, with the control of ports, customs and the consular department. The *Reichstag*, without much demur, passed a series of laws supplementing the constitution adopted by its predecessor, as well as the Federal budget for 1868. It also, on October 18th (a historic date), adopted a military law which fixed the total of the field-army of the Confederation, up to the close of the year 1871, at one per cent. of the population of 1867—in other words, at 315,000 men, with a reserve slightly less, and a *Landwehr* slightly more, numerous; so as to form a grand total of 955,000 men. King William I regarded this law as the completion of the work begun by him, nine years before, on the lines laid down by Roon, and thanked the veteran Minister of War in a memorable letter[1].

Meanwhile, the southern states had been greatly disturbed by the question, vitally important for their future, whether their diets would approve the treaties, now no longer secret, of offensive and defensive alliance with Prussia and the *Zollverein* treaty with the North-German Confederation. In the two most important states, a violent agitation—the last to be noted in the history of the long-lived contention between north and south—arose against

[1] Roon, *Denkwürdigkeiten*, vol. II, p. 515. Cf. as to the military law and Liebknecht's radical opposition, Ollivier, vol. X, pp. 24 ff.

approval. At Munich, Hohenlohe, on October 8th, laid before the Chamber of Deputies the *Zollverein* treaty; the military treaty, according to the Bavarian constitution, needed no confirmation by the diet. In view of the widespread opposition to the 'sacrifices' required, as well as of the 'great anxiety' of King Lewis II on behalf of the independence of his crown and monarchy, Hohenlohe expressed himself unwilling to propose the entrance of Bavaria into the new Confederation; but he, likewise, declared himself opposed to any southern confederation either under the leadership of Austria, or self-dependent. He adhered to his policy of a national connexion (*Verbindung*) between the south-German states—not Bavaria only—and the federated north, and urged, in any case, the preservation of the bond of union which secured the material interests of Germany and was the indispensable antecedent of a national conjunction of any sort or kind[1]. This diplomatic speech, showing that its author had already learnt the lesson that the half may be greater than the whole, had the effect of carrying the *Zollverein* treaty in the Chamber of Deputies by an overwhelming majority (117 against 17); but the *Reichsrat*, led by Freiherr von Thüngen (whom his friends would have liked to see in Hohenlohe's place), hesitated, and finally only approved the treaty on condition that the *liberum veto* formerly possessed by Bavaria in all questions of *Zollverein* duties and taxes, but omitted from the present treaty, should be restored to her. Hereupon, Hohenlohe, who had assented to the amendment in his capacity of *Reichsrat*, saved the situation by suggesting that he and Thüngen should pay a visit to Berlin, in order to do their best to carry through the introduction of the *liberum veto* among the conditions of the treaty. Here, they found that the North-German

[1] See Hohenlohe's speech, and a full account of the ensuing transactions in Bavaria, in his *Denkwürdigkeiten*, vol. I, pp. 268 ff.

Reichstag was on the point of passing the customs treaties, conditionally, however, on the acceptance by the southern states of the offensive and defensive alliances with Prussia; and, on October 28th, it took this course by a majority of 177 to 26, adjourning on the same day. The Bavarian visitors had their answer, accompanied by a warning from Bismarck that, if the Bavarian *Reichsrat* should insist on rejecting the treaty as it stood, Bavaria would from May 1st, 1868, onwards, be excluded from the *Zollverein*. After the Second Chamber at Munich had, with virtual unanimity, approved the unamended treaty, the *Reichsrat* followed suit by a vote of 35 to 13 in its favour.

About the same time, a decision was reached in Württemberg, where the protectionists, the ultramontanes and the radicals of the *Volkspartei* had violently denounced both the treaty of alliance and the *Zollverein* treaty. The agitation was led by Moritz Mohl, in a pamphlet adjuring the Württemberg Chambers to stand out against the new *Zollverein*, and urging southern Germany at large to remain neutral, instead of becoming the whipping-boy of Prussia, who had torn Germany to pieces[1]. Finally, the two treaties were approved in both Chambers by large majorities (the last stage being reached on November 4th), after a debate in the course of which Varnbüler, perhaps not altogether unmoved by jealousy of Bavaria, declared that, whatever might have been his former views, the year 1866 had solved the German question once for all. With Grand-ducal Hesse, notwithstanding Dalwigk's invective against Prussia, for the benefit of the French Minister at Darmstadt, there was no difficulty; and in Baden the treaties were approved with all but absolute unanimity in both Chambers. The ratifications of the customs treaties were

[1] *Mahnruf vor den äussersten Gefahren.* (*A warning against extreme perils.*) Cf. Ollivier, vol. x, pp. 4 ff.

exchanged on November 6th, on the condition laid down by the North-German *Reichstag*.

The sum total of these transactions, and more especially the attitude of Varnbüler at Stuttgart, who had declared that he spoke for his colleagues as well as for himself, seemed to Grand-duke Frederick of Baden and his Minister, the veteran Liberal Mathy, to indicate that the time had come for a further step in advance. On November 18th, Mathy wrote to Bismarck, stating the reasons which seemed to make it the duty of Baden to seek immediate admission into the North-German Confederation, insisting, among other arguments, on the influence which the fulfilment of this desire would exercise upon the imminent elections to the *Zollparlament*. Mathy by no means stood alone in this wish; but Bismarck, who was out of touch with the Baden as well as the Coburg courts and Governments, instead of returning a direct answer, sent word by the Baden envoy at Berlin, that he was unable to return the desired reply to Carlsruhe. The brave Mathy's heart was broken—he died in February 1868[1]. Whether Bismarck was deterred by signs of a reaction in Württemberg (where the King could not obtain the consent of the Chancellor to a three years' military service), or whether he was not at present willing to run the risk of foreign intervention in what he had described as a purely internal concern, he still held his hand. His fundamental position was that, the best way would be a joint movement for admission into the new Confederation on the part of the south-western states, and that the admission of Baden alone was inexpedient. Not the less was the Germany of the future indebted to the persistent efforts of Baden and its highminded Grand-duke. The military conference of these states held at Munich in October, 1868, had no result of importance; but the reorganisation of the army

[1] See G. Freytag, *Karl Mathy*, pp. 410 ff., and the touching passage (p. 416), written just before the War of 1870.

continued, in Baden under Mathy's able and energetic successor, J. Jolly, and, more slowly, in Württemberg, under the successive Ministers of War, Freiherr von Wagner, and the resolute military reformer General von Suckow. But a far more potent impulse was needed, before the consummation could be reached which was to convert the North-German Confederation, united with its south-German allies in a common military system and by common material interests, into the new German empire.

Both the Prussian *Landtag*, which assembled on November 20th, 1867, and the North-German *Reichstag*, which met on March 23rd, 1868, displayed great activity, attesting a strong desire to strengthen the foundations of the uncompleted Federal state and, at the same time, to secure adequate parliamentary control over its institutions and government. But the *Landtag* in particular, following a tendency which, with the remedies afterwards sought to be applied to it in the shape of coalitions and *blocs*, became a hindrance to the free development of German political life, was divided into an excessive number of fractions, led by men of conspicuous debating ability, and mindful of their party traditions or aspirations. The ship needed wary steering. An old and still unsettled controversy, of which the origin was the prosecution of Twesten and another for speeches made in the Chamber so far back as 1865, led to the passing of a motion by Lasker asserting the constitutional right of freedom of parliamentary utterance, and to the resignation of Count zur Lippe, the tenacious Minister of Justice, whose part Bismarck had taken without fervour, and who was succeeded by the Hanoverian Leonhardt (December 5th). The *Herrenhaus* threw out Lasker's resolution; but the case against Twesten was stopped, with Leonhardt's connivance and Bismarck's approval. When, however, in the North-German *Reichstag*, Lasker proposed a resolution similar to that which he had moved in the Prussian *Landtag*

(April 3rd), and it was carried by a majority of nearly two-thirds, Bismarck induced the *Bundesrat* to throw it out unanimously. Thus, neither Conservatives nor Liberals had secured his whole-hearted support; but, though Lasker's renewal of his effort in the *Reichstag* of 1869 met with the same result, so that Bismarck and the Confederate Governments had not yielded on the principle of the dispute, no prosecution of the kind ever again occurred in Germany.

A less formidable-looking proposal in the *Reichstag* by Miquel (April 22nd, 1868) really involved the more pressing question of Ministerial responsibility. Moved as an addition to the law brought forward by the *Bundesrat* on the administration of the Federal debt, and asserting the right of prosecuting by law delinquent officials, it would have established an effective responsibility, on this head at all events, of the Chancellor himself. When, notwithstanding Bismarck's vigorous protest, the motion was carried, Bismarck promptly withdrew the whole law on behalf of the *Bundesrat*.

Meanwhile, the elections for the *Zollparlament*, which was to meet on April 27th, boded ill for its success. Prices were high, burdens heavy and passions strong; and, except in Baden and Hesse-Darmstadt, the elections had gone against the national or 'Prussian' party. In Bavaria, a vehement ultramontane effort had taken advantage of universal suffrage to secure 28 out of the 48 districts assigned to that kingdom, while the supporters of the union had secured only one-fourth of the entire Bavarian contingent. In Württemberg, six supporters of the conciliatory policy of the Government (including the Ministers Varnbüler and Mittnacht themselves) had been elected, and eleven *Grossdeutsche* or democrats. The south as a whole, at this significant moment, sent to Berlin 50 pronounced particularists, as against 35 friends of the commercial policy of the North-German Confederation.

These figures, significant of the political as well as commercial opinions which still prevailed in southern Germany, were ominous of the proceedings in the combined Customs-parliament. A motion for an address to the King of Prussia, looking forward to a union of the entire German nation beyond the sphere of mere commercial interests, was elbowed out (by 186 to 150) in favour of the simple order of the day. Divers trade and navigation treaties were approved; and, among them, a commercial treaty with Austria, showing free-trade tendencies on both sides, passed its earlier readings. On May 15th, however, the tobacco-duties proposed by the Governments were reduced, by more than three-fourths, through a combination of National-Liberals, *Fortschritt* and southern democrats. But when, on the motion for the third reading of the Austrian treaty, the quick-witted radical free-trader Bamberger introduced an amendment (ultimately carried) reducing the duty on imported wines, the southern champion Moritz Mohl raised a stormy debate of principle. His assertion that the particular Governments retained the right of taxing foreign imports up to a certain *maximum* involved the fundamental question of the right of the *Zollbundesrat* to interfere with territorial taxation. Anti-Prussian feelings found an opportunity for allowing themselves free vent; and the French terror was invoked, but loftily waved aside by Bismarck. Next came the petroleum-tax, which, like the increased tobacco-tax, was regarded as cruel to the poor, and decisively rejected. The remaining taxes proposed were approved; but when the *Zollparlament* closed at the end of May, the southerners could congratulate themselves on the spoke they had put in the wheel of national union; though, significantly enough, one of their number (Sepp) at Kiel, whither the members had been taken to see the new fleet, declaimed against the French.

More practically, the *Reichstag*, after reassembling on May 27th, adopted the proposal of Otto Camphausen, a moderate Liberal like his brother Ludolf[1], and long a leading financial official, to commit the administration of the loan voted for naval purposes in the previous year to a joint board, representing *Bundesrat*, *Reichstag* and the Prussian Supreme Chamber of Accounts (*Oberrechnungskammer*). The decisive voice had been Moltke's, who took occasion to declare that he saw no prospect of putting an end to wars till a Power should establish itself in the centre of Europe strong enough, without being itself intent on conquest, to make war impossible to its neighbours. The remaining legislation of the session was chiefly concerned with economic and social questions, more especially the extension to the Confederation at large of the right of industrial association, which the efforts of Schulze-Delitzsch had established in Prussia. Socialism had, of late years, consumed much of its activity in intestine conflicts; nor was it till the very eve of the war with France that the movement as a whole became frankly communistic, and that the great body of its supporters resolved to further its end by an active participation in both *Reichstag* and *Zollparlament*[2].

In the parliamentary assemblies which crowded the period from November 1868 to the spring of 1870, the

[1] Cf. *ante*, vol. I, p. 454 *et al.*

[2] The disputes which had arisen since the death of Lassalle (August 31st, 1864) had ended in an open split at a general meeting of deputies from working-men's clubs, held at Nürnberg early in September 1868. The majority (68), under the leadership of Bebel, adhered to the programme of the First International Congress at Geneva in September 1866, while the minority (the Lassalleans and the deputies of the clubs originated by Schulze-Delitzsch) declined to take part in politics proper. Another general social-democratic Congress, held at Eisenach in August 1869, only temporarily healed the rupture; and it was only at a further Congress, held at Stuttgart from June 4th to 7th, 1870, that Bebel and Liebknecht finally had their way.

uppermost question was that of finance. Confidence in the maintenance of the peace of Europe had, as will be seen, not been permanently restored; the harvest of 1867 had, in many parts, been bad; and, throughout the following year, trade and industry had continued to stagnate. In addition to the heavy claims for military expenditure, in Prussia the provinces, old and new, demanded annual grants on the same lines as those allowed to Hanover and Electoral Hesse. Thus, when the Prussian *Landtag* met in November 1868, von der Heydt's budget showed a deficit of rather more than 5 million dollars (*c.* £750,000). This the Finance Minister proposed to meet in what Bismarck described as Austrian rather than Prussian fashion—namely, neither by new taxes nor by a loan, but by the sale of state property, chiefly Cologne-Minden railway shares; and, notwithstanding the reluctance of both Bismarck and Roon, the dangerous expedient was adopted. When, in March 1869, the Federal budget for 1870 was laid before the *Reichstag*, the estimated receipts of the Confederation were found to fall short of its estimated expenditure by 2½ million dollars more than in the budget for the current year. Of the contributions required from the Governments to cover this total, four-fifths would fall on Prussia; and the new taxes proposed by von der Heydt, among them one on brandy (another of the poor man's 'necessaries'), were rejected by the *Reichstag*, whose action was, in June, followed by the *Zollparlament*, more especially in the matter of the tax on petroleum. The two assemblies were dissolved on the same day (June 22nd, 1869); and, when, early in the following October, the Prussian *Landtag* reopened, a deficit of 5½ millions was announced to it for 1870, which would necessitate heavy fresh taxation and a loan. Von der Heydt's *fiasco* was complete, and he resigned his office before the month was out. Otto Camphausen, who, to the satisfaction of all parties, took his place, by a bold financial operation (consisting mainly in

the conversion of 223 million dollars, nearly half the existing public debt, into irredeemable annuities) relieved the state of the compulsory annual payment of nearly 4½ millions, and thus rendered the recurrence of a deficit unlikely for many years to come (December 13th). The radical Opposition had in vain pressed the alternative course of a reduction of expenditure by a diminution of armaments, which Virchow declared would accord with the pacific sentiments of the French nation. But the Prussian Chamber preferred to proceed after a different fashion, and, by approving Camphausen's proposal (by 242 to 128 votes), wiped out the Prussian deficit and put an end to a constant source of controversy between Governments and Parliaments.

Thus the *Reichstag*, which opened on February 14th, 1870, and again on May 9th, for a three weeks' session, could devote its main attention to social legislation[1]. Lasker's motion of thanks and encouragement to Baden was withdrawn (February 27th), after a speech from Bismarck, in which he demanded to be allowed to choose the right time for completing the work of national union. Early in May, the labours of the *Zollparlament*, by means of a compromise as to taxation, contrived by the Old-Liberal von Patow, came to a satisfactory close. By midsummer, 1870, when the *Reichstag* closed with a temperate royal speech, much had been done to advance the inner cohesion of the North-German Confederation, to which the control of foreign affairs had now been formally transferred by the Prussian Government. But except in matters of trade and industry, and of military readiness, no effective progress had been made towards its union with the states of the south-west. Bismarck still resisted the efforts of Baden to

[1] The abolition of the penalty of death, except for attempts against the life of the sovereign, even in states where this abolition had hitherto been total, gave Bismarck a strange opportunity for denouncing particularism.

hasten her admission into the Confederation before the other southern states, Bavaria in particular, had declared their readiness to enter it. Of this there was no sign, and, so long as Hohenlohe had remained at the head of the Bavarian Government, he had needed all his skill and self-restraint to keep both King and Chambers fairly well in hand. In February 1870, Hohenlohe (whose intervention in the matter of the Oecumenical Council, to be noticed below, had embittered the opposition to him[1], and who in the previous November had already placed his resignation in the hands of the King) was forced by a vote of want of confidence in both Houses of the diet, in which nearly all the royal princes joined, to resign finally; and in March his place was taken by Count von Bray-Steinburg (hitherto envoy at Vienna), a man of moderate views and disposition but representing the party desirous of preserving the autonomy of the kingdom. In Württemberg, the Minister of War, Wagner, had to quit office after a vote of the Chamber for military reduction (April); but he was succeeded by the King's energetic military adviser, Suckow. There was no change of policy in either kingdom; but the prevalent popular feeling allowed no advance towards national union. When, in the early spring of this fateful year, Prince Anton of Hohenzollern paid a visit to Berlin, the watchful Benedetti was informed that the Prince's purpose was to lay before King William a proposal for his assumption of the imperial crown, the Kings of Bavaria and Württemberg being cowed into submission[2]. The story was, as a matter of fact, wide of the mark; for the Prince's visit was concerned with a quite different project, out of which, however, was to grow the consummation persistently feared in France.

[1] *Denkwürdigkeiten*, vol. II, p. 3.

[2] The rumour, in a somewhat different form, reached Hohenlohe through Roggenbach. *Ib.*, pp. 5 and 7. See also Ollivier, vol. XIII, ch. I, sec. 2.

CHAPTER VI

FRANCO-GERMAN RELATIONS, 1866–1870

The Peace of Prague, as has been seen, was concluded on August 3rd, 1866; and France, whose mediation had not extended to a share in the pacification, or in the responsibility for its terms, could not reconcile herself to its results[1]. The main motive which united imperialists, Orleanists and republicans in their dissatisfaction at Prussia's successes was national jealousy; and, unless something were done to meet this feeling, the Napoleonic *régime*, as it successively turned its back upon Germany, Mexico and Rome, was more and more in danger. After the achievements of 1866, Bismarck and many less fully informed observers in both northern and southern Germany gradually came to entertain no doubt but that the outbreak of war with France was merely a question of time. Probably, they were right; since jealousy is at least as potent a force as interest in the relations between peoples.

[1] For the chief authorities used in the present chapter see *Bibliography*. Ollivier, whose value as a historical authority is belittled by Sybel, has been compared with him throughout. As to the earlier part of the transactions here summarised, special use has been made of the notes of a very shrewd and favourably placed observer, Rothan, then French consul-general at Frankfort. Vol. III of O. Meding's memoirs (already cited for Hanoverian affairs) shows a close knowledge of certain passages in the political history of these years, but ultimately loses itself in the quicksands of self-destructive intrigue.

But the policy of Bismarck, whose ascendancy in the counsels of his sovereign, though at no time absolutely uncontrolled or unchecked, was rendered more assured by his triumphs, was, in the first instance, directed to the postponement of that outbreak, till a stronger and more thoroughly organised Germany could confidently take the field. It was, therefore, desirable to seem to meet the wishes of France, if they could not be actually met, without affronting German national spirit, upon the encouragement of which everything depended for the great final effort. Far more difficult to decide than the attitude of Bismarck, who, as he himself repeatedly pointed out, could at any time go off the scene, or even than the bearing of his sovereign, or, again, than the pose of an irresponsible parliamentary luminary accustomed, like Thiers, to command the applause of a listening Chamber, was the action of the French Emperor. Upon him, ageing and enfeebled by a mortal disease, there pressed on all sides the continuous demand for 'compensations' to France—a demand which, in the interests of his throne and dynasty, seemed imperative; while, at the same time, with the magnanimity that formed part of his nature, he still, amidst a flood of invective and satire against him and his, cherished the political conception which, of all 'Napoleonic ideas,' lay nearest to his heart. The principle of nationalities, which, with his aid, Italy, and now, without it, Germany, had successfully asserted, was dear to him, as it was to them; what they could not understand was his wish that they should each place limits, of his choosing, upon its extension.

The peace negotiations between Austria and Prussia had not yet come to a close, when, partly under the influence of his own convictions, partly in response to von der Goltz's confident assurances of Bismarck's reasonableness, the Emperor Napoleon resolved upon a change of policy. For 'compensations' were to be substituted, as the phrase ran,

great 'agglomerations.' Drouyn de Lhuys, who, after the failure of his endeavours to bring about an alliance with Austria, had not succeeded in obtaining the 'compensation' of Mainz and the Bavarian Palatinate, had now (August 20th) sent in his resignation; and the Emperor Napoleon, while still keeping in view the alternative scheme of a triple alliance with Italy and Austria[1], sought, in the first instance, to arrive at a satisfactory mutual understanding with Prussia. Benedetti, who had opened negotiations with Bismarck in this direction, having declined the French foreign office, it was temporarily filled by the appointment of Marquis de Moustier, at the time French ambassador at Constantinople and formerly at Berlin, where his paternal and maternal grandfathers had likewise represented France. Pending his arrival, the direction of foreign affairs was committed to Marquis de La Valette, the statesman whose frank counsels had, on a momentous occasion[2], determined the Emperor in favour of a pacific policy, of which, like Rouher at this time, La Valette steadily advocated the maintenance. In the form of a circular bearing his signature, the Emperor, on September 16th, published in the *Moniteur* the manifesto which revealed to its disappointed readers his views of the European situation and of the part France ought now to play.

While vindicating to her the right of choosing her alliances, and bidding her regard without fear the dissolution of the old Germanic Confederation, the aggrandisement of Prussia and the national consolidation of Italy, this document declared that France had no desire for annexations, except of populations already united to her by identity of manners and national spirit. The thought of Luxemburg and Belgium cannot have been absent from this proposition, and it was in substantial agreement with the

[1] Cf. *Gedanken und Erinnerungen*, vol. II, pp. 53–4.

[2] Cf. p. 301, *ante*.

paper which, in August 1866, Benedetti had written down in Bismarck's presence, in the course of their conversations, as expressing what the Prussian statesman considered, or professed to consider, a possible agreement between his Government and the French. The draft had been transmitted by Benedetti to the Emperor, who, through Rouher, had empowered his ambassador to 'accept in principle,' and added, on his own account, the futile suggestion that Prussia should annex Protestant Saxony, and compensate its King on the Catholic left bank of the Rhine[1]. This document stipulated that France should recognise the recent Prussian annexations, and that Prussia should facilitate the French acquisition of Luxemburg; while France would not object to a federal union between the North-German Confederation and the southern states (except Austria), with a common parliament. Should France be led by circumstances to send troops into Belgium or conquer it, Prussia would give armed support to France; and, in order to assure the preceding arrangements, the two Governments would, as part of the present compact, conclude an offensive and defensive alliance. The question, now that the Peace of Prague had been signed (the treaties of alliance with the southern states were, of course, still a secret), was: What would be the decision of the King of Prussia on the proposals as returned to Bismarck in their final form? Public opinion in France, especially after the La Valette circular, was expectant of acquisitions which, while in harmony with the principles of nationalities, might reconcile French interests and French pride to the actual aggrandisement of Prussia and the eventual extension of her influence, if not of her hegemony.

[1] See the preface to Benedetti's *Essais Diplomatiques* (1895), in which he seeks to bring home to Bismarck the primary responsibility for the idea of a French acquisition of Belgium. For the text of Benedetti's draft see Sorel, vol. I, pp. 26–7.

The grand-duchy of Luxemburg, which had formed part of the dominions of the first French republic and of the first French empire, had, in 1839, much against its will, instead of being transferred to Belgium, as was the ardent desire of the Catholic Luxemburgers, remained subject to the King of Holland and included in the Germanic Confederation. But that Confederation was now dead, and the historical argument that Luxemburg had of old not only formed part of the Holy Roman Empire, but furnished Emperors to it, could hardly be held of account. On the other hand, the main language of the population was certainly German—an awkward fact for the application to the present case of the nationality principle; but the La Valette circular laid stress upon bonds more trustworthy than community of language[1]. Diplomacy would, therefore, have to devise the requisite bargain with King William of Holland for the transfer—not the first in the history of the grand-duchy—of his rights of sovereignty; while the unconcealed desire of the Luxemburgers themselves to remain independent must be, more or less, ignored. While the acquisition of Luxemburg would go some way towards balancing recent Prussian gains, the union of Belgium to France, with the countenance and assistance of Prussia, was deemed a fair price for acquiescence in the development of her relations towards south-western Germany.

With regard to Belgium, it had, in the later days of its history, been as much exposed to the covetousness of its neighbours as was now the grand-duchy, which it would itself have been glad enough to absorb. So early as 1821, Tsar Alexander I having sounded the French Government

[1] The case against the inclusion of the grand-duchy in the new German Confederation is well argued in the Belgian interest by P. Nothomb, *Histoire Belge du Grand Duché de Luxembourg*, cited by F. Gribble in 'The Future of Luxemburg' in *The Nineteenth Century and After*, No. CCCCLXXIV, August 1916.

as to the gain France would expect in the event of the expulsion of the Turks from Europe, Villèle had suggested to the Duc de Richelieu, then Prime-minister, that the sole desirable compensation for the gains of other Powers was to be found in 'Belgium and the departments of the Rhine.' Some three years later, Count La Ferronays, French ambassador at Petersburg, made the same suggestion, but ineffectually; and, seemingly in 1828, after Navarino, he, as Foreign Minister, repeated it through the Duc de Mortemart, his successor at the Russian Court, to Tsar Nicholas I. It formed part of the still more liberal 'compensation' which, in the following year, General Richemont secretly laid before the Dauphin and the Ministry. Soon after this, Prince de Polignac had formed the administration in which he filled the office of Foreign Minister. With the aid of Count Bois-le-Comte, director of political affairs in this department, he worked out, and obtained the approval of the Royal Council for, a 'grand design,' which has its place among the curiosities of French history by the side—but *longo intervallo*—of that of a Bourbon more famous than Charles X. Its object was a revision of the map of Europe, which included certain drastic territorial rearrangements in Germany; while to France was to be transferred (besides Saarbrücken and Saarlouis) Belgium, with Luxemburg, Zealand and North-Brabant. But the Peace of Adrianople (September 1829) had put an end to the primary project of the partition of the Ottoman empire; and Polignac's grand design collapsed, even sooner than the throne it was to have glorified[1].

Bismarck, before going on leave early in September 1866, had pointed out to Benedetti the obvious suspicions which

[1] See, for an account of the successive stages of the history of the Luxemburg-Belgian idea, Professor A. Stern's essay, 'Der grosse Plan des Fürsten von Polignac v. J. 1829' in *Reden, Vorträge und Abhandlungen* (1914).

would be excited throughout Europe by the conclusion of an offensive and defensive alliance between Prussia and France. As to Luxemburg, whose future was the immediate point, he was magnanimously ready to recommend to the King the withdrawal of the Prussian garrison, if this would ensure the firm friendship of France. But in no case, he continued, could Prussia take the initiative at the Hague for inducing King William III to cede Luxemburg to France, and least of all could there be any question of a compensatory cession to him of German territory. On Bismarck's return to Berlin, Benedetti sought to learn from him the decision of the King of Prussia on the proposed Franco-Prussian agreement. Only a few days had passed since information had reached Paris of the conclusion of the secret treaties of alliance between Prussia and the states of the south-west. Apart from this, the fact of the confidential mission of General von Manteuffel to Petersburg (August 7th) suggested, in the words of Benedetti, that Prussia had found a way of 'covering herself against the displeasure of France.' On the other hand, none of the Ministers or Marshals consulted by the French Emperor was prepared to take up a determined attitude in the crisis brought on by his diplomacy; and the report of the military commission which was made public about this time (December 12th), and which recommended the organisation of an army of 800,000 men—more than half of them to be called out by the simple fiat of the Ministry of War—was so unfavourably received that it had to be shelved.

Thus, after an interview between Bismarck and Benedetti on December 3rd, it soon became evident that, while the dilatory policy of the former continued to shelter itself behind the necessity of ascertaining the wishes of the King, the Emperor was unwilling to break off negotiations on the basis—or something like the basis—of the August draft. King William showed little inclination for

a French alliance (against whom was it to be directed? the Crown-prince asked Bismarck, who in return suspected him of being influenced by 'the Government of his mother-in-law'); and, as to the Prussian garrison at Luxemburg, he regarded the retention of it there as a duty imposed upon him by treaty. Moltke was in favour of retaining the fortress, or at least of rasing it; and Bismarck, though not afraid of war, seems to have stood nearly alone in preferring evacuation to the risk of a premature outbreak of what might prove a prolonged struggle. At the beginning of the year, as the opening of the legislative sessions approached in both countries, a critical conversation took place between Bismarck and Benedetti. The King, Bismarck now stated, might perhaps be induced to offer France a defensive alliance securing to her the benevolent neutrality of Prussia; an offensive alliance was out of the question. As to the Prussian garrison at Luxemburg, he was not disposed to recall it spontaneously; but France might, perhaps, think fit to bring about that result by means of a vote of the population, or by consenting to the rasing of the fortress.

Napoleon was very wroth; but he was now much preoccupied with the internal changes announced by him in his open letter of January 19th, 1867. The notion of an alliance with Prussia, though it was not buried till a little later, was by this time really dead. As between France and the North-German Confederation, the matter at issue was reducing itself to Luxemburg; 'once at Luxemburg,' wrote Benedetti about the middle of February, 'we shall be on the road to Belgium.' As for the southern states of Germany, their right of determining their future for themselves was expressly allowed in the French yellow-book published early in the same month. Yet, in his speech at the opening of the Legislative Body on February 14th, the Emperor boasted that the voice of France

had sufficed to prevent the entrance of the victorious Prussian troops into Vienna, and pointed out that, at the present day, the influence of a nation depends on the number of men it can put in the field, thus indicating that his reforms were not to imply any stoppage in the reorganisation of the French army. On the other hand, the *Reichstag* was, on the 24th, opened by King William with a speech conveying the assurance that, so soon as possible, north and south would, of their own free will and on the basis of the Peace of Prague, settle their mutual national relations.

The Dutch Government was, practically, ready to consider any solution of the Luxemburg question except the inclusion of the grand-duchy in the North-German Confederation. Early in February 1867, however, the French Government, which had received favourable reports from its emissaries as to public opinion in Luxemburg, though Benedetti stated the desire there to be for independence, began to sound both the Dutch Government and the Luxemburg administration as to a possible cession of the grand-duchy to France; and the Emperor's policy was aided by the good offices of Queen Sophia of Holland (a Württemberg princess well remembered as one of the cleverest great ladies of her day). The Dutch Court was, as often happens in neutral states, divided in its interests; the King's brother Prince Henry, who governed the grand-duchy and favoured Prussia, and his Minister Baron Tornaco, being opposed to any present action. But the Dutch Ministry, of which Count van der Zuylen was the head, would have been glad to get rid of the grand-duchy of Luxemburg in the best way possible, while, partly by this means, securing to Holland the duchy of Limburg. Such, too, was the opinion of the Prince of Orange.

Meanwhile, the French propaganda in Luxemburg sought specially to prepare the population for a *plébiscite* on the

future government of the country. Moustier now thought the time ripe for proposing to the Dutch Government two treaties: the one guaranteeing to Holland, by means of a defensive alliance, the possession of Limburg, and the other assuring to France the cession of the grand-duchy. Benedetti took his departure for Paris under the impression that the King of Prussia would not object to the cession of the grand-duchy by Holland to France, and that, after this had been accomplished, the Prussian garrison would be withdrawn from the fortress. But there was, or ought to have been, no certainty in this impression. As to the Prussian right of garrison, it had undoubtedly come to an end with the dissolution of the Germanic Confederation, on whose behalf it had been acquired in 1815–16, and confirmed by a treaty between the four Allied Powers and the Netherlands in 1817, followed by a resolution of the Diet in 1820[1]. Notice to quit could only be given by the Power holding the sovereignty over the grand-duchy. This it was now proposed to transfer to France; but the European Powers, which had allowed to Prussia the right in question, and which in 1839 had taken part in settling the relations between Belgium and Luxemburg, had to be consulted before they were altered. Neither Russia nor Great Britain, however, seemed to have any present thought of intervention; although, at Vienna, Beust declared himself unable to encourage the French Government in a course which must offend German opinion. In any case, the French Government now proposed definitely to the King of Holland a convention, which was to remain secret till after a vote of the Luxemburg population, for the cession of the grand-duchy to France, in return for an

[1] In 1856, a convention between Prussia and Holland had substituted for the Prussian right of furnishing three-fourths of the garrison, that of furnishing the whole. Ollivier, vol. IX, p. 165.

adequate indemnity (from four to five million francs was the figure suggested), together with a secret treaty permanently guaranteeing the integrity of the rest of the Dutch dominions (Limburg, of course, included). The King of Holland replied to the French *chargé d'affaires* at the Hague, Baudin, that he 'did not say no' to these proposals.

So far matters had, on the whole, gone well for the success of the first instalment of the new French policy. On March 16th, 1867, Thiers had in the Chamber denounced German unity, but at the same time advised that nothing should be done at present to throw southern Germany into the arms of Prussia, and Prussia into those of Russia (in other words, that the imperial Government's military reforms should be rejected). Two days later, whether or not in reply to this oration, Bismarck published the secret treaties of alliance with the south-German states; and no protest followed from either Austria or France. The King of Holland, determined to be on the safe side, immediately apprised Baudin that he thought the consent of the signatories of the Treaty of 1839 indispensable to the cession of the grand-duchy; and the Dutch envoy at Berlin, van der Bylandt, was instructed, if interrogated on the subject, to state that his sovereign would not proceed to the cession without the consent of Prussia. An interval of uncertainty now followed, during which, in the face of the growing excitement in the *Reichstag* and in the country at large, the attitude of Bismarck stiffened, and he persistently declined to accord the desired consent in his master's name. As yet, both in the *Reichstag* and in his colloquies with Benedetti, he evaded any declaration of a decided policy in the Luxemburg affair; and, on March 22nd, he went so far as to ask the French Government to prevent the King of Holland from making any communication to the King of Prussia concerning the proposed cession, as if it were a design which, if made known, must

lead to an explosion. The warning, which was, in all probability, sincerely meant—for Bismarck's wishes were at this time all in favour of peace—came too late.

The King of Holland, pressed by his Ministers, had resolved to request Count Perponcher, the Prussian envoy at his Court, to obtain the King of Prussia's assent to the proposed cession, and, on the 26th, sent his son, the Prince of Orange, to Paris, with a letter to the Emperor, stating his intention to cede the grand-duchy to France, and urging the Emperor to obtain the King of Prussia's consent to the transaction. King William telegraphed back, that he could not pronounce on the subject without knowing the views of the other Powers who had signed 'the treaties.' While the air was full of fears or hopes of conflict, Bismarck's attitude continued anything but bellicose; indeed, he seemed to be in search of fresh expedients for solving the problem. Among other suggestions, he revived one which the French Government had already rejected: that, if the fortress were evacuated by the Prussians, the fortifications, of which the reconstruction had been partly defrayed by German money, should be dismantled. Of this Benedetti would not hear; and, especially as Bismarck dwelt on the apprehensions at Petersburg of difficulties arising in the way of the contemplated visit of the King of Prussia, and perhaps of that of the Tsar, to the great Paris Exhibition, the French ambassador inclined to the conclusion—doubtless correct—that Bismarck's present object was to disclaim any knowledge of the Franco-Dutch project. Thus, the Emperor Napoleon concluded that no time must be lost to make the cession an accomplished fact; and, the telegraphic consent of the King of Holland having been obtained to the agreement, Baudin was summoned to Paris, and returned to the Hague on the same day (March 31st) with his final instructions. The King of Holland was now asked to sign the treaty of cession at once, the Emperor of the

French taking upon himself the responsibility of obtaining Prussia's assent to it *ex post facto*.

The crisis now seemed imminent, if it had not yet arrived. Public opinion in Germany had settled down into a determination not to allow the cession, and in France to insist upon it. Von der Goltz sent word from Paris that armaments were being carried on at high pressure, and Rothan from Frankfort that Prussia was forming three new army corps. In London, Bernstorff suddenly enquired from the Foreign Secretary, Lord Stanley, what would be the bearing of the British Government, should war break out between France and the North-German Confederation. Meanwhile, the *Luxemburg Gazette*, inspired by the wish of the Government and population of the grand-duchy not to be swallowed up, boldly denied that a treaty of cession had been concluded[1]. On April 1st, the King of Holland—it is said under female influence (not that of the Queen)—declared himself ready to sign; but the delay of a day was granted in order that information might be sent to Baron Tornaco.

Rarely has the question of war or peace hung on so slender a thread of time. Benedetti, though fairly puzzled by Bismarck's ambiguous attitude, concluded that he would not advise the King of Prussia to yield to military counsels or public opinion and go to war about the accomplished fact, if only it was clear that Prussia had neither given nor refused her assent to it; and von der Goltz avowed that it would be absurd to fight on so unimportant an issue. But it had become necessary to tack once more. The agitation at Berlin was growing apace, and an interpellation in the *Reichstag* by Bennigsen had been arranged for April 1st, to which Bismarck proposed to reply in a tranquillising

[1] Bismarck had, on March 27th, declined the request of the Luxemburg Government, made so long since as October 12th, 1866, for an international alliance with Prussia, the existing garrison arrangements in the fortress remaining unaltered.

sense. On the previous day, he had informed Benedetti of his intention, and had pointed out the necessity of delaying the signature of the treaty of cession. But the French ambassador had received telegram upon telegram from Paris, announcing that the Emperor would not go back; and, on the morning of the fateful April 1st[1], he called upon Bismarck, who was on the point of proceeding to the sitting of the *Reichstag*. Bismarck, intent upon clearing his Government from all responsibility as to the cession, without affronting military opinion and public feeling at home, pointed out to Benedetti, who accompanied him by a garden way to the parliament house, the inevitable effect of an announcement to the *Reichstag*, on the authority of the French ambassador, that the treaty was as good as concluded; and Benedetti declined to take the responsibility thus imposed upon him[2]. On his return to the embassy, he found a further dispatch from Moustier, which stated explicitly that the treaty would be signed in the course of the day.

Had Bismarck made this announcement to the *Reichstag*, it would have been difficult, if not impossible, to prevent an outburst of public feeling which would have led to a declaration of war against France by the North-German Confederation. Instead, he answered Bennigsen's enthusiastically received speech, denouncing this first attempt to tear away fragments of Germany, by a temperate exposition of the reasons which had induced the confederated Governments to abandon any idea of admitting the grand-duchy of Luxemburg into the North-German Confederation, adding that they considered the Prussian right of garrisoning the fortress to have expired, and desired to maintain a

[1] It was the day of the opening of the Great Exhibition at Paris by the Emperor Napoleon, who had, just before the ceremony, received the news of the imminence of the Mexican catastrophe.

[2] The whole episode, which admirably illustrates Bismarck's presence of mind, is excellently told by O. Meding, vol. III, pp. 206 ff.

good understanding with a pacific neighbour of equal rank. So far, they had no occasion to know that a treaty with the grand-duchy had been concluded by France, although they could not state the contrary with certainty, and were not aware whether its conclusion was near at hand. The view taken by the Governments of such a transaction could, therefore, not yet be declared; in any case, they must first ascertain the views held by the other signatory Powers of 1839, and by the German nation and the North-German *Reichstag*. Bismarck denied that any negotiations on the subject of Luxemburg were on foot between France and the North-German Confederation; for the rest, since the confederated Governments hoped that no foreign Power would prejudice their rights, they trusted to be able to guard these by peaceful negotiation, the more so since they and the German nation were at one in the matter.

By this speech, which was well received, and after which the *Reichstag* passed to the order of the day, Bismarck succeeded in clearing his Government from the widely-felt and, in the circumstances, extremely natural suspicion that the Prussian and French Governments had 'negotiated' on the subject of Luxemburg. In the technical sense of the term, this denial was so exact that the French Government, a fortnight afterwards, made a declaration to the same effect. But he was not equally successful in tranquillising public and satisfying military opinion in Germany. An immediate explosion, indeed, had been averted here; and, though for a time the French Government kept the question of the cession in suspense, the King of Holland, after being formally advised by the Prussian Government to refrain from abandoning Luxemburg to France, confessed, through van der Zuylen, that he saw no way out of the difficulty but to yield 'in face of the threatening eventuality of a European war.' How near that 'eventuality' had been suddenly brought, was shown by the rumours of war

and by the preparations for it which continued, both in Germany, till the middle of April, and in France, where Marshal Niel continued his efforts for the day when the *chassepot* should assert its superiority over the *Zündnadel*, while the gates of Strassburg citadel were kept jealously closed. Meanwhile, it was sought, on both sides, to secure the approval of the other Powers for what had been done, and for what had been left undone. A circular dispatch by Bismarck appealed, as it were, to the goodwill of Napoleon against the aggressive influences around him; and Moustier, recognising the difficulty of carrying out the cession scheme, although neither Beust nor Lord Stanley had taken objection to it, fell back on the demand for removal of the Prussian garrison, as to which the support of the three Great Powers could scarcely fail the French Emperor.

Thus, Prussia seemed, after all, in a dilemma between what, in northern Germany at all events, would be denounced as submission to a demand which the Prussian Government still professed to regard as contrary to the treaties of 1815–17 and 1856, and a refusal, which, in the existing temper of France and a great part of Germany, could hardly but lead to war. Bismarck could not give a more than passing consideration to Beust's impracticable alternative of transferring the grand-duchy to Belgium, with a compensation to France (consisting mainly of the duchy of Bouillon); and Beust himself would have nothing to say to the scheme suggested by Count von Tauffkirchen, as the agent of the Bavarian Prime-minister, Hohenlohe, of an alliance, with special reference to the Luxemburg question, between Austria and Prussia, to be joined by the south-western states[1]. Finally, while Gortchakoff at last made it manifest that Russia was preparing to intervene actively in behalf of peace, Lord Stanley, with the

[1] See Hohenlohe, *Denkwürdigkeiten*, vol. I, pp. 225 ff.

aid of a personal letter to King William from Queen Victoria, pressed upon the Prussian Government the expediency of giving way in the matter of the removal of the garrison, to which the ostensible difference was now narrowing itself down, and which the French Government continued to urge. At the same time, Gortchakoff, averring that the other Great Powers were unanimous as to the expiration of Prussia's right of garrison, proposed a conference of the Great Powers in London, on the basis of the neutrality, to be guaranteed by them, of the grand-duchy. In face of the continued ferment of public opinion, and the eagerness for war of the military chiefs at Berlin, Bismarck, on April 26th, yielded to the pressure brought to bear upon him by Great Britain, Russia and (though in a less degree) Austria. On April 26th, he expressed to Lord Augustus Loftus his willingness to accept the proposed conference on the basis indicated, which implied the removal of the Prussian garrison from the fortress; he insisted, however, on the evacuation being treated, not as part of the basis of the conference, but as a consequence of its resolutions.

Both before and at the Conference, which met in London on May 7th, Bismarck, through Bernstorff, adopted a very determined bearing. A few hours before the opening, Bernstorff demanded that Lord Stanley's presidential draft, in which there had been no mention of a general and individual guarantee of the neutrality of the grand-duchy, should be amended by the insertion, as indispensable, of this requirement. The difficulty was solved, after a fashion, by the diplomatic ingenuity of the Russian plenipotentiary, the veteran Baron Brunnow, at whose suggestion the requirement of a collective or common guarantee was proposed by Bernstorff; so that, the case arising, it would be left to a joint resolution of the signatory Powers to declare whether a violation of neutrality had occurred, and what steps should be taken in consequence. At

the meeting of the Conference on May 9th, Lord Stanley announced the assent of his Government to the new formula, and thus ensured the adoption of the treaty as a whole[1]. Besides the neutrality of the grand-duchy, guaranteed in the above form, the treaty, signed on May 11th, provided for the continuance of the sovereignty of the King of Holland over the grand-duchy, which retained its right to control its customs tariff and to conclude commercial treaties, and remained a member of the *Zollverein*. The Prussian Government undertook to evacuate the fortress after the ratification of the treaty, and, this having been accomplished on May 31st, the Prussian garrison departed; and the King of Holland undertook to dismantle the fortifications.

Europe could breathe again; and all the nations could join in flocking to the great festival of peace, the Paris Exhibition, with their sovereigns at their head. It is true that, during the month of continuous diplomatic effort, France had gained time for organising her forces to resist the attack which, at the Prussian military headquarters was being, not less vigorously, prepared; and that Marshal Niel, who on April 1st had estimated the strength of the French army at 385,000, on May 15th reckoned it at 455,000 men[2]. But, in spite of his efforts, and Moltke's counsels at Berlin, the note of peace had been sounded on both sides of the Rhine; and the murmurs were silenced. In France, Napoleon's policy had, for the present, prevailed over military and clerical influence[3]; and in Prussia it was, not for the first or the last time, made clear that public

[1] He subsequently, in the House of Commons, minimised the responsibility undertaken by the British Government, comparing it to that of a member of a limited liability company.

[2] Ollivier, vol. IX, p. 345.

[3] According to Meding (vol. III, p. 214) the influence of the Empress Eugénie was, in this instance, exerted for peace.

feeling there might be overruled even where, as in this case, it had military authority on its side.

Bismarck's action in the Luxemburg affair is not so easy to understand. As he afterwards said, he had required an *accomplished fact*, and had been asked to pronounce on a *fact to be accomplished*[1]. He came out of the controversy victorious on the more immediate issue; for the cession of the grand-duchy to France, which neither Russia nor Great Britain had sought to prevent, had been frustrated; and to the evacuation of the fortress by the Prussian garrison he cannot be supposed to have intended to offer a more than temporary resistance. On the other hand, Prussia had submitted to the decision of the Powers with regard to the neutrality of the grand-duchy; and the connexion between Limburg and Germany was at an end. His treatment of the whole affair had not been altogether self-consistent; it long exposed him to both military and political censure, and it has been differently judged even by some of the best-informed of historical critics[2]. That it was sincere was the belief, to the last, of Benedetti, who had the best opportunities of observing its successive phases[3]. We have Bismarck's own statement that his reason for postponing the outbreak of war with France was the incompleteness of the military reorganisation of the dominions recently added to the Prussian monarchy, and that he had, at the time, too high an opinion of the efficiency of the French army[4]. The expression used by Lorenz[5], that Germany was never so 'split up' as it was

[1] Ollivier, vol. IX, p. 448.

[2] See the appendix 'Bismarck's Politik' in the second (popular) edition of Sybel, vol. VI.

[3] Ollivier, vol. IX, p. 326.

[4] *Gedanken und Erinnerungen*, vol. II, p. 53, and M. Busch, cited *ib.*, pp. 342 ff.

[5] O. Lorenz, p. 121.

early in 1867, at least requires modification, in view of Prussia's recent treaties of alliance with the south-western Governments. It is true that the Luxemburg Conference coincided in date with the Bavaro-Württemberg proposal, at once rejected by Bismarck, of a league with the North-German Confederation, which was designed to avert their actual admission into it, and to bring about an alliance between itself and Austria[1]; and it was at this very time that, in the Stuttgart Chamber, Varnbüler ventured to assert that the treaty of alliance with Prussia left to Württemberg the right of deciding whether a *casus foederis* had arisen. On the other hand, the Bavarian Government informed the Prussian that, in the event of war with France, the treaty of alliance with Prussia would determine its own action. Thus, Bismarck can hardly have feared that the south-west would fail to stand by the side of Prussia in a war with France on so clear an issue as that of the cession of the grand-duchy of Luxemburg. It seems, therefore, more reasonable to conclude that, apart from military considerations, neither he nor his sovereign was willing to risk a war of defiance rather than of defence, in which Prussia, with her northern confederates, and her southern allies, would have had the opinion of all the other Great Powers against her. Great as was already the power of Prussia, the statesman at her helm considered that it was not yet great enough to confront, together with the jealousy of France, the united pacific interests of the rest of Europe.

Accordingly, the Emperor Napoleon, who had invited Tsar Alexander II and King William I separately to the great international festival, had the honour of entertaining them conjointly at Paris (June); and Bismarck accompanied his master, having consented to do so when told

[1] See O. Lorenz, p. 135, and cf. *ante*, pp. 367–8.

that assassins were lying in wait for him there. But, while it was the Tsar upon whose life an attempt was made, the King of Prussia and his Minister were not ill received; and the latter was confidentially consulted by the French Emperor as to the expediency of carrying out the Liberal reforms promised by him to France in his letter of January 19th.

The Austrian Emperor and his consort's visit to Paris (in which it had been attempted to advance Guelf interests by providing the Empress with a companion in the person of Princess Frederika of Hanover) was put off on the arrival of the tragic news of the execution of the Emperor Maximilian at Queretaro (May 15th, 1867); and Napoleon's cherished idea of a Franco-Austro-Italian alliance had, thus, likewise, to be postponed. On the suggestion, however, of the Empress Eugénie, a visit of condolence was paid by the French imperial pair to Salzburg (August 18th–23rd), whither the Emperor Francis Joseph was accompanied by Beust and his Hungarian colleague, Count Julius Andrássy. The long conferences held on the occasion between Napoleon and Beust did not advance beyond the drafting by the latter of a memorandum that professed to establish the maintenance of the Peace of Prague as the point of view from which Austria and France agreed in regarding the political situation. The south-western Governments, this was intended to imply, would not seek to go beyond their actual *status*. But, as a matter of fact, Article IV of the Treaty of Prague, though it had given to these Governments the right of entering into an 'international, independent' association of their own, had not imposed upon them any obligation to take such a step; nor was Prussia in any way bound by the Treaty to refuse their states admission into the North-German Confederation if they desired it; nor had either Austria or France any right to interfere with such admission. Was the French assumption, to which the attitude of Austria gave implicit support, to be accepted

as an axiom?' Grand-duke Frederick of Baden lost no time in declaring (September 5th) that he adhered to his desire to enter into a national union with the North-German Confederation; and Bismarck, while expressing satisfaction with the official denials of the Austrian and French Governments that any alliance against Prussia had been concluded at Salzburg, declared that the process of settling the national relations between the German south and north must be left to the free decision of the former.

In October, the Emperor Francis Joseph, after a perfunctory interview with King William on the frontier, paid his deferred visit to Paris, where he was well received; but the European political barometer was hardly more affected by the imperial meeting, than it had been by the general peace congress at Geneva in the preceding month. Before the Salzburg interview, French diplomacy, steadily ignoring the fact that France had taken no part in the conclusion of the Treaty of Prague, had attempted to hasten the execution of another of its provisions. By Article V, Austria transferred her rights in Schleswig-Holstein to Prussia, on the understanding that, 'should the inhabitants of the northern districts of Schleswig by a free vote signify their desire to be united to Denmark, (these districts) shall be ceded to Denmark accordingly.' This provision was interpreted by Prussia as implying that a boundary-line must be fixed, before the inhabitants within it were asked to vote on its future; and it was further determined at Berlin not to make over any German town populations to the Danish Government without further guarantees. For the rest, although Bismarck mentioned that the coming elections for the first ordinary *Reichstag* of the North-German Confederation would indicate the bias of popular preference in North Schleswig, their actual result was that, in the whole of Schleswig, 25,598 Danish were recorded as against 24,664 German votes, though it was contrived that

only a single Danish candidate should be actually returned[1]. Bismarck declared that this result proved the expediency of postponing further action in the matter; and, to the discredit of Prussia, her policy in this question remained persistently unchanged. In 1867, the Danish Government asked advice in Paris; but Moustier's complaints (July) only called forth another circular from Bismarck, firmly declining foreign interference[2].

The year 1867, which had been one of much economic depression in Germany, was not to close without fresh political complications. The defeat at Mentana, with French help, of the Garibaldian attempt upon Rome (October 17th) had exasperated Italian public opinion to such an extent that Napoleon felt the Roman question to be soluble only by a European congress, and began at once to invite the participation of the European Governments all and sundry—from Russia and Great Britain down to Saxony and Hesse-Darmstadt[3]. Bismarck's attitude towards the proposal was of the coolest, though King William courteously promised that his Government would bear in mind the desire of Catholics for the independence of the Pope; and, when, on December 5th, Rouher solemnly announced that France would never (*jamais!*) allow the Holy Father to be driven from Rome, the congress idea was already dead. Early in 1868, the French Emperor deviated into the opening of fresh negotiations with Italy which, if the accession of Austria could be secured, might lead to a triple alliance between the three Powers. But, before these attempts came to anything, Napoleon had to make up his mind whether to resist or to accept the union between the German north and south-west, towards which the course of events

[1] See as to this and the preceding election W. R. Prior, *North Sleswick under Prussian Rule*, 1864–1914, p. 7.

[2] Cf. Ollivier, vol. IX, pp. 269 ff.

[3] *Ib.*, vol. X, pp. 183 ff.

seemed at this time more and more tending. Benedetti at Berlin, however, in vain pointed out the necessity of a decided policy on the subject, which Prince Napoleon had recognised as desirable immediately after Sadowa[1]. For Moustier's instructions were that the Emperor's intentions on this head should not be divulged; and Marshal Niel's efforts to carry through his plans for increasing the French army met with a widespread and vehement opposition, which, by the autumn of the year, led to their curtailment. Thus, the French negotiations with Italy gradually came to be discontinued, as the latter Power grew more and more intent upon the possession of Rome. The Vatican, whose views as to the relations between Church and State had been promulgated in the *Encyclica* and *Syllabus* of 1864, was now engaged in forging new thunderbolts. One of these was an allocution (June 22nd, 1868), directed against the new Austrian constitution and the law (of the previous December) which accorded freedom of religious exercise to the adherents of the three Christian creeds acknowledged by the state. And, a week later, the Pope formally summoned, for the last month of the following year, an Oecumenical Council, which, being announced to heal all the errors of the times, could not but include their political principles among its subjects of discussion. The Bavarian Prime-minister Hohenlohe accordingly, by his circular of April 9th, 1869, sought to induce the European Governments with Catholic subjects to consider the matter to be brought before the Council and, if necessary, to agree on a protest against the passing by it, without reference to themselves, of resolutions affecting the relations between Church and State[2]. On

[1] See the tribute to the Prince's extraordinary foresight in Lord Newton's *Life of Lord Lyons*, pp. 129 ff. (popular edition). Lord Lyons had taken up the Paris embassy in October 1867.

[2] See, for this circular, of which the substance was written by

this head, Beust showed becoming caution; while his general policy at this time was largely swayed by that of the Hungarian Prime-minister, Count Julius Andrássy, and based upon the desire that the dual monarchy should have time to recover its strength, before entering into a new and most serious conflict.

Thus left to himself and his uncertainties, the Emperor Napoleon is found catching at straws or sending up bubbles, in order, by increasing the influence of France in Europe, to soothe an irritated public at home. He listens for a moment to the absurd rumour of a projected confederation between the south-western states of Germany and Switzerland. And he recurs to the pious offer of Queen Isabella of Spain to take upon herself the duty of protecting the Pope at Rome: when (September) the Queen's own throne is cast to the ground, the French public, of course, believing Bismarck to be at the bottom of the insurrection. As a matter of fact, he only took advantage of its occurrence to announce to the world, through one of his journals, that the North-German Confederation must recognise in the case of Spain the right of a nation to regulate its own affairs which the German claimed for itself[1].

Near the close of 1868, as will be seen immediately, the European Powers, more especially Prussia and Russia, agreed to the Emperor Napoleon's proposal of a conference at Paris on the affairs of the Near East, in which Prussia now took an interest mainly, though not altogether, of a dynastic character. Mention has already been made of Prince Charles Anthony, the head of the Sigmaringen branch of the 'probably elder' and Roman Catholic line

Döllinger, and for his questions to the (Catholic) Theological and Law Faculties of the Bavarian Universities, Hohenlohe, *Denkwürdigkeiten*, vol. I, pp. 351–3.

[1] Ollivier, vol. XI, pp. 72–3.

of the house of Hohenzollern[1], which had for six centuries been separated from what was now the Brandenburg-Prussian line, till in 1850 Prince Charles Anthony, and his Hechingen kinsman of whom he was the heir, formally ceded their sovereign rights and those of their descendants to the Prussian dynasty. The Prince, whose opportune alienation of a peculiarly worthless sovereignty had shown his good sense, had given evidence of his capacity as President of the Prince Regent's Ministry in 1858[2]; he was, as his letters remain to show[3], distinguished by a wide and statesmanlike grasp of affairs, and on terms of intimacy both with King William and with the Emperor Napoleon, with whom he was connected by both birth and marriage[4]. His daughter Princess Stephanie was married (in 1858) to King Pedro V of Portugal. Of his sons, all of whom served as officers in the Prussian army, the eldest, Leopold, was, in 1861, married to the infanta Antonia of Portugal. The third, Anthony, fell at Königgrätz. But it is the second son, Charles, with whom we are at present concerned.

After the Roumanian revolution of February 1866, which deposed Prince Couza, the Porte had desired that the election of a native hospodar should testify to his vassalship; and, though among the Powers represented at the Conference on Moldo-Wallachian affairs then sitting at Paris, only France took exception to this, the national party, headed by John Bratianu, for the opposite reason, desired the election of a foreign prince. According to Prince Charles himself, the proposal of his name was inspired by France; and, notwithstanding the Emperor

[1] On the extinction of the Hechingen branch, in September 1869, he assumed the simplified title of Prince of (*zu*) Hohenzollern.

[2] Cf. p. 29, *ante*.

[3] See the *Reminiscences of the King of Roumania*, here cited in Sidney Whitman's English version (Leipzig, 1899).

[4] His mother was a niece of Murat, and his mother-in-law, Stéphanie Beauharnais, an adopted daughter of Napoleon I.

Napoleon's disclaimers of selfish motives, and his unwillingness to take the responsibility of the proposal, it was certainly acceptable to him as likely to strengthen the influence of France in the Balkans. On the other hand, the King of Prussia personally disliked the scheme, and both Prince Charles and his father at first declared themselves unable to signify the assent to which they inclined, without consulting the King as head of their house.

Inasmuch as the question of the authority of the King of Prussia over the Hohenzollern Princes was, four years later, to become of European importance, it may be stated here at once that these Princes had, in 1851, been formally constituted a branch line of the royal house of Prussia. They were, therefore, not only bound to pay a general respect to the wishes and counsels of its head, the King of Prussia, as the head of the whole house of Hohenzollern, but, in accordance with their own house-law of 1821, the Sigmaringen Princes were debarred from certain acts until they had obtained the King's consent. These acts included marriage[1] and the entrance into foreign service, either civil or military; but they did not include the acceptance or refusal of a proffered foreign throne. It is perfectly clear that no Hohenzollern Prince, though technically free to take so important a step, could think of taking it without the assent, open or tacit, of the King of Prussia. It is equally clear that the King's own action would not leave reasons of state out of sight; and that he would in this respect be advised by his Minister.

And so it came to pass. When, on March 31st, 1866, the Roumanian statesman John Bratianu announced, at Düsseldorf, that the Provisional Government at Bucharest

[1] Thus, Prince Charles, who visited France in 1863, with a view to marrying a Princess of the imperial house, desisted from his intention when objection was taken to it by King William. In 1869 he married the gifted Princess Elizabeth of Wied ('Carmen Sylva').

proposed to put Prince Charles forward as candidate for the Roumanian throne, he replied not unfavourably, but reserved his definitive decision till he should have received the permission of the King of Prussia to take a step of so much importance. Not until, a fortnight later, Prince Charles Anthony received the news of his son's election, did the King give utterance to his opinion, which was doubtful and dilatory rather than negative. Prince Charles himself, hereupon, had an interview with Bismarck, who advised him, since in this case he had no need for the King's permission, to ask for leave simply to go abroad, and then confront the Conference and Europe with an accomplished fact. The Prince, however, found that the King still hesitated; while from Paris, whither Bismarck had suggested a visit, came the news that the Emperor Napoleon, though he would be pleased to see the Prince on the Roumanian throne, could not commit himself. In the end, the King summoned Prince Charles Anthony to Berlin, and, while consenting to refrain from influencing Prince Charles's decision, agreed to allow the 'accomplished fact' process to take place. On May 11th, Prince Charles vanished from Düsseldorf, and on the 20th (having resigned his Prussian commission) reached Bucharest with Bratianu, and amidst general rejoicing took charge of the government of Roumania. The Conference at Paris pronounced the election illegal, but, in reply to a demand of the Porte, refused to use force against the Prince, whom the Prussian Government declared to have acted entirely on his own motion.

Bismarck and Prussia, as he was on occasion[1] fain to confess, were at this time not sufficiently interested in the affairs of the East, whether Near or Far, for the political

[1] E.g., to Prince Napoleon on his visit to Berlin in March 1868. As to the significance of this visit, see Lord Augustus Loftus's *Diplomatic Reminiscences*, 2nd series, vol. I, pp. 216 ff.

action of Prince Charles, who was very soon recognised as hereditary ruler of Roumania by the Porte, to seem of direct importance to them. The designs and aspirations, however, of Bratianu and the nationalists in the united principality caused great uneasiness to Beust and the Austrian Government, and troubled the French in its character of the protector proper of Turkey; though Prince Charles declined to countenance a rebellion in Hungary proposed to him by the versatile arch-rebel General Türr, or to respond to the prayers of a Serbian deputation urging a joint effort of all the Balkan Christians for their liberation from the Turkish yoke. On the whole, he deferred to Bismarck's and his own father's advice to lean mainly on the goodwill of Russia, upon which Prussia herself continuously relied.

France, meanwhile, would gladly have entered into more intimate relations with Austria as well as with Italy, from whom it was the constant endeavour of Bismarckian policy to keep her asunder. The efforts of Prince Metternich at Paris and of the vehemently anti-Prussian Duc de Gramont at Vienna were constantly directed to this end. Throughout 1868, jealousy of the progress of Prussian policy was as strong as ever, while, on the German side of the Rhine, the idea of the recovery of Alsace-Lorraine was ominously rising to the surface[1]. But Austria's financial condition was still so unsatisfactory, and her military preparedness so incomplete, that the Triple Alliance project had to be once more shelved, and the Emperor Napoleon's project of warning the North-German Confederation against crossing the Main abandoned.

[1] This idea, publicly proclaimed by Moltke (in the *Deutsche Viertelsjahrschrift*) so far back as 1841, was revived in the *Kreuzzeitung* of October 15th, 1867 (cf. Ollivier, vol. x, p. 47); and Schleinitz (Minister of the Household, and formerly of Foreign Affairs) is stated to have declared in April 1868, that, within eighteen months, Alsace would be Prussian (*ib.*, vol. xi, p. 217).

Count Vitzthum, Beust's former Saxon and now Austrian colleague, whom he had sent to Paris to survey the ground and who was now Austrian envoy at Brussels, in September waited upon Napoleon at Biarritz, with a proposal for a general disarmament; which, however, the Emperor, well aware that it would at once be refused by Prussia, rejected, both as suggested by Beust and as amended by Rouher. He seems about this time (October) to have made an effort to approach the Prussian Government on the subject through the British; but Lord Stanley declined[1]. Yet Bismarck, who, in view of the incompleteness of the union of north and south-west in Germany, was still anxious to maintain peace, now made use of the paramount influence of Prussia upon the proceedings of the Roumanian Government, to insist (through Count von Keyserling, then Consul-General at Bucharest) on the dismissal of the Bratianu, and the appointment of a pacific administration. The ambitious design of a Daco-Roumanian empire was, herewith, extinguished; and Russia and Prussia, this time, fell in[2] with the Napoleonic proposal of a conference on Turkish affairs, which had been further complicated by an insurrection in Crete. The result of the Conference (February 1869) was that Turkey retained possession of Crete, Greece bowing to the decision of the Powers, and that the Near East was once more still.

But, though this settlement had gratified the self-consciousness of France, it could not greatly affect her attitude towards the German policy of Prussia and its prospective advance. The feeling against Prussia was, at this time, not what could be described as bellicose—it had never been such with the Emperor Napoleon or with Rouher, who was still his most trusted adviser; nor did the Empress Eugénie desire war for its own sake, or Marshal Niel feel assured that the

[1] See *Life of Lord Lyons*, p. 169.

[2] Great Britain without much confidence. *Ib.*, p. 147.

armaments of France sufficed for a war in which she seemed likely to stand alone. A conservative war-party, indeed, existed; but the 'Arcadians' were as yet far from being masters of the situation. The view still prevailed that the jealousy of Prussia's aggrandisement, present or future, might still be appeased, and French pride satisfied, without a war with the North-German Confederation and its allies in arms. The acquisition of Belgium by France was once more on the *tapis*; and this time, an attempt was made to accomplish it in a semi-occult or roundabout fashion.

In December 1868, two Belgian (and one Dutch) railways were induced by the French Eastern railway to sign a preliminary agreement by which they conceded to the French Government the virtual control and possession of important lines of transit to Brussels (and the Netherlands). No sooner had this become known in Belgium than fears arose of annexation as the result of this 'peaceful penetration'; and the ambitious vanity of the French envoy at Brussels, La Guéronnière, contributed to give colour to the suspicions which prevailed. The affair was debated in the Belgian Second Chamber, where the Liberal Minister Frère-Orban declared that the cession of Belgian lines to a foreign company without Government authorisation was impossible, and that such authorisation would never be accorded. One of the first notes of alarm was a letter written to Lord Clarendon by command of Queen Victoria on January 14th, 1869, which was followed by a memorandum from Gladstone, insisting on the fact that 'the independence of Belgium was an object of the first interest to the British people.' The Belgian railway-lines, however, adhered to their bargain, and, on January 31st, 1869, their agreements with the French Eastern railway were finally concluded. But they had ventured too far. Frère-Orban now proposed to the Second Chamber an uncompromising law making any alienation of the kind conditional

on the approval of the Government; the law was almost unanimously passed; and the railway treaties had been annulled. In Paris, fuel was added to the fire by the report that the action of the Belgian Government had been inspired by Bismarck—a report which Clarendon, one of the Prussian statesman's least friendly critics, characterised as 'a complete mare's nest[1].' The Emperor Napoleon chose to treat the proceeding as a *soufflet* to himself; but, although thoughts of an immediate annexation of Belgium passed through his mind, he very speedily abandoned them, and, summoning Metternich and Vitzthum to an audience, proposed to them, as 'something better,' the renewal of negotiations for a triple alliance between France, Austria and Italy. The Austrian diplomats, however, fell back on the counter-scheme of a merely defensive alliance between the three Powers; and on this basis negotiations, hereupon, proceeded with Beust and the Emperor Francis Joseph, with every prospect of success, and also, through Count Vimercati, with the Italian Government. The Prussian Government, meanwhile, kept quiet.

The Belgian railways difficulty gradually subsided. Frère-Orban, who had arrived at Paris on April 2nd, declined to give way under the pressure of French demands for the revival of the offending railway treaties; and, as Prussia abstained from all provocation, while Great Britain counselled moderation, it was the Emperor Napoleon who at last yielded. On April 27th, La Valette and Frère-Orban signed a protocol, which upheld the annulment of the railway-contracts and referred the compensation of the French Eastern Company to a commission. The dispute was at an end, though a belated admonition to Belgium subsequently arrived from Beust, which was reprobated by Clarendon.

Was the secret negotiation as to the alliance between France, Austria and Italy to have an ending similar to the

[1] *Life of Lord Lyons*, pp. 148–50.

Belgian railways scheme? Rouher and Beust had agreed upon their draft defensive treaty, which reserved to Austria the right of declaring herself neutral if France began a war. But Italy had not gone so far: her policy being still to insist on immediate possession of Rome as an essential condition of her alliance, though with a guarantee on her part for the personal security of the Pope. Of the further concession to Italy of the Italian Tyrol, Beust would not hear. Thus, distracted as Napoleon was with the pressure of Liberalism at home (successful in the elections of May 1869), and by the consequent gradual change in his system of government, while the Prussian Court was on friendlier terms with the Austrian (as shown on the occasion of the Crown-prince's successful visit to Vienna in October), the triple alliance scheme once more gradually vanished into air. On January 2nd, 1870, Émile Ollivier, hitherto consistently the friend of peace and ready to accept the national development of Germany, took office as head of a constitutional Ministry; and the political situation in Europe seemed to continue hopeful, so long as the broken health of the Emperor Napoleon held out. Yet, constitutional government in France was no guarantee for the preservation of peace, and, if anything, lessened the personal influence of the Emperor in its favour.

In January 1870, therefore, one more effort, albeit tentative and hesitating, was made towards obtaining a better security for the prolongation, at all events, of the peace of Europe. The disarmament scheme of 1868 was taken up by Ollivier, who, though with the expressed consciousness that a rebuff from Prussia would mean war, engaged Great Britain's good offices with her for obtaining her consent to a partial disarmament. Early in February, in reply to a communication from Clarendon through Lord Augustus Loftus, Bismarck, who referred both to the recent danger of a French invasion of Belgium and to his fears

of a change in Russian feeling towards Germany in the event of the accession of a new Tsar, professed himself unable to bring a disarmament proposal before the King, and begged (superfluously) that it might not be mentioned to the French Government. Count Daru, the new French Foreign Minister, hereupon informed Clarendon, through Lyons, that he intended, in any case, to reduce the French annual number of reservists from 100,000 to 90,000 men, which signified a total reduction of the army by the latter number. Further correspondence with Bismarck ensued; but it became perfectly clear that, if the disarmament proposal were accepted at all, it would be so hedged in as to become useless; and it was accordingly abandoned without having been made public[1].

The fateful year 1870 thus seemed to be pursuing its course without either much fear arising of an immediate outbreak of war, or much hope of a final removal of the differences, or of the motives beneath the differences, which were likely, sooner or later, to provoke it. The apprehensions which had taken root in interested quarters showed themselves on the occasion of a visit to Paris by Archduke Albrecht, the victor of Custoza, who communicated to the Emperor Napoleon a plan of military cooperation among the three members of the postponed triple alliance, in the event of a war against Prussia and her confederates and allies, and who, at the Emperor's request, left a copy of the plan with him. In March, there was some diplomatic friction between Daru and Bismarck on the subject of Baden's desire for admission into the North-German Confederation; and Ollivier upheld his colleague by means of a balanced protest and veiled menace of French intervention, should

[1] For a full and authentic account of it see chap. VII of the *Life of Lord Lyons*. Ollivier (vol. XV, p. 405) thinks that its publication would have left British opinion no room for doubting the pacific intentions of France.

pressure be used to bring about the union of the south-western states with the Northern Confederation. But, for the present, France abstained from interference in German affairs, and left untouched the North-Schleswig question, in which she had taken so special an interest. Austria too, notwithstanding the warlike excursus of Archduke Albrecht, maintained for the present an unprovocative bearing, since her wishes as to the Near East had been treated with consideration by Prussia; while any joint action between Italy and France seemed less probable than ever. The Oecumenical Council (which had assembled at Rome in December 1869) was now in full activity; and Ollivier would not permit an open conflict either with the papal pretensions, as favoured by the Council, or the papal interests, as affected by the question of Rome. Thus, when the Pope (through Cardinal Antonelli) refused to lay before the Council Daru's memorandum safeguarding the rights of State against Church, though it was supported by the Austrian, Prussian and Bavarian Governments, the French, by Ollivier's advice, silently submitted to the affront, which could hardly fail to react upon the relations between France and Italy.

The differences between the French Foreign Minister and his chief as to the need of a parliamentary sanction for the *plébiscite* which on May 8th, by an overwhelming majority, declared the adherence of the nation to the Emperor Napoleon's dynasty and policy, led to the transfer of the conduct of foreign affairs from Daru, not to the pacific Ollivier, as some had wished, but to the Duc de Gramont, previously French ambassador at Vienna. The appointment of Gramont, who, while devoid of high statesmanlike qualities, was a vehement adversary of the advance of Prussia in Germany, and who, already in 1868, had regarded a Franco-Prussian war as inevitable, was welcome to the Arcadians and the clerical party, and of ill omen

for the preservation of peace[1]. In the matter, indeed, of the St Gotthard railway, when the North-German Confederation had joined the Italian and Swiss Governments in contributing to the cost of the enterprise, and vehement jealousy had, in consequence, been excited in France, he prudently avoided an explosion, by declaring it to be understood that no troops should be allowed to pass into Italy by the line in question. But he soon showed whither his thoughts tended. It would seem as if his confidence in the result of a conflict with Prussia and her allies had been strengthened by the absence of any reports of an alarming nature as to military preparations in Prussia either from Benedetti or from the French military *attaché* at Berlin, Colonel de Stoffel (whom Benedetti himself desired to see recalled from that post). With Italy, though sanguine as to an ultimate alliance, Gramont was in no haste about carrying on negotiations; but with his Austrian friends he was eager to come to an understanding. On May 19th, he laid Archduke Albrecht's plan of campaign before a group of French general officers (after Marshal Niel's death the bellicose General Le Bœuf had succeeded as Minister of War); and, soon afterwards, General Lebrun (who was on terms of intimacy with the Emperor Napoleon) arrived at Vienna to confer with the military authorities there. In the course of his enquiries, he was, on June 14th, informed by the Emperor Francis Joseph himself that, though he approved the plan of campaign in which the conference had resulted, he could not bind himself to declare war at the same moment as France. In the event of a violation of the Peace of Prague by Prussia, Austria must be warned in good time, as she required 42 days for mobilisation. The plan of campaign was, as a matter of fact, suited to these conditions; for it suggested an immediate advance of the French into the heart of south-western Germany, where Austrian

[1] As to this appointment, see Ollivier, vol. XIII, p. 437.

interests would have been directly involved; nor can there be any doubt that among the subjects of Francis Joseph the large majority would have rejoiced in an attempt to baffle Prussian ambition. But though Austria was, probably, willing to be ultimately driven into action by what she might regard as necessity—such as an attempt on the part of Prussia to force the south-western states into union—no immediate cooperation on her part, still less on that of Italy, was in sight. France had no reason for building on the active goodwill of Great Britain or (notwithstanding the mission of General Fleury) on the abandonment by Tsar Alexander of his friendship for Prussia[1]—when the long-gathering conflict between France and Germany suddenly burst into flames.

Just a fortnight before the actual beginning of the Franco-German War, and on the day (July 5th) before the declaration made by the French Government to the Chambers rendered that war virtually certain[2], the British permanent Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs, in words which have been often quoted, observed that in his long experience he had never known 'so great a lull in foreign affairs' as at the present moment[3]. Whatever other conclusions may be

[1] Towards the close of 1869 he had even been credited with the design of preventing Austria from aiding France by a movement of troops on the Galician frontier. (Ollivier, vol. XIII, p. 285.)

[2] See p. 448, *post*.

[3] Mr Hammond's statement was made on July 5th to Lord Granville, who had been appointed Foreign Secretary after Lord Clarendon's sudden death on June 27th, and was repeated by him in the House of Lords on July 11th. See Lord E. Fitzmaurice's *Life of Lord Granville*, vol. II, p. 32. On June 30th, Émile Ollivier had, in still stronger terms, declared that 'never before had peace been so solidly assured.'

The account which follows is, primarily, based upon the extremely useful chronology of data and their sources in R. Fester's *Briefe*, etc., compiled in connexion with his *Neue Beiträge zur Geschichte der Hohenz. Thronkandidatur* (Leipzig, 1913). Sybel's narrative

drawn from this statement, even a very brief summary of the transactions and events which immediately followed can leave no doubt as to the suddenness of the crisis which, in the course of the first fortnight of July 1870, overwhelmed Europe.

That Bismarck had long regarded war with France as an ultimate issue for which it behoved Prussia and her confederates to be prepared; that he was supported in this view by Moltke, Roon and the heads of the army in general; that neither he nor they had regarded the Luxemburg settlement in any other light than that of a postponement; and that, as time went on, and the Prussian military preparations became more and more complete, while the difficulty of securing union between the north and the south-west

of these transactions is extremely elaborate, but needs modification in several respects. With it should be read both the supplementary *Neue Mittheilungen und Erläuterungen* printed in vol. VI of the later editions of the work, and, more especially, H. Delbrück's singularly impartial essay, *Das Geheimniss der Napoleonischen Politik im J.* 1870, in *Preuss. Jahrbücher*, vol. LXXXII (1905). Ollivier's long *apologia* (in vols. XIII and XIV of *L'Empire Libéral*) cannot be perused without sympathy; but, notwithstanding the enormous pains taken by the writer and the evident general sincerity of his pleading, it is beyond doubt the weakest part of his work. The publications of Gramont and Benedetti ('Ma Mission à Ems' in *Essais Diplomatiques*), the *Reminiscences* of Lord Augustus Loftus, and more especially those of the King (Charles) of Roumania and the *Life of Lord Lyons* (by Lord Newton) should be consulted, and reference made to the *Gedanken und Erinnerungen* and the memoirs of Keudell and of H. Abeken, who was witness of the transactions at Ems. For later treatments, see A. Sorel, *Histoire Diplomatique de la Guerre Franco-Allemande*, vol. I; Rothan, *L'Allemagne et l'Italie*, vol. I (*La France et l'Allemagne en Juillet et Août*, 1870); La Gorce, *Histoire du Second Empire*, vol. VI; Oncken's *Zeitalter des Kaisers Wilhelm*, vol. I, *ad fin.* Cf. also Lord Acton's essay 'The Causes of the Franco-German War,' repr. in vol. II of his *Historical Essays and Studies* (1907), and Marx, *Bismarck und die Hohenzollernkandidatur* (1911). For full titles of all these works, see *Bibliography*.

by a pacific evolution seemed undiminished, he was ready to welcome any favourable opportunity of war with France—these are assumptions which seem incontestable. A favourable opportunity would be one which should place France clearly in the wrong before the eyes of Europe, making it difficult or impossible for her to conclude the alliances for which she had paved the way, while to Prussia it would be one distinctly providing the *casus belli* that would secure to her the active cooperation of the German south-west. But, to await, or look forward to, such a consummation is not the same thing as to provoke it; moreover, the King of Prussia was master of his own mind and not easily driven into war. On the other hand, while in France there was, before the *plébiscite* (May 8th) a strong though not universal wish, to which Lord Lyons testifies, for a war unmistakably provoked by Prussia, as 'a welcome diversion from internal difficulties,' this feeling was in some measure, at least for a time, abated by the vote of national confidence in the imperial Government. If the foreign policy of France were managed judiciously by the new Foreign Minister, both the head of the Government, Ollivier, sensitive as he was to the beat of the public pulse, and, above all, the Emperor, would continue to follow their genuinely pacific tendencies, whatever confidence official as well as public opinion might have in the superiority of the French arms. So long, foreign alliances would remain, more or less, in abeyance; and in the innermost imperial counsels, some hesitation would remain as to their actual conclusion.

Such was the general state of the relations between France and Germany when, in the early days of July 1870, the Hohenzollern candidature for the Spanish throne first became a determining element in their progress. The previous history of that candidature has, intentionally or otherwise, been left more or less obscure. The first suggestion of it, as a possible consequence of a very possible

vacancy, seems to date back to a conversation held at Biarritz, between certain Spanish politicians, nearly two years before the dethronement of Queen Isabella of Spain, including Don Eusebio de Salazar y Mazaredo, a Councillor of State and Liberal-Unionist deputy, and Freiherr Georg von Werthern, then Prussian envoy at Madrid and formerly at Lisbon (from 1867 at Munich, where, during twenty-two years, he contributed materially to the consolidation of the new German empire). The same Prussian diplomat, in January 1867, informed Prince Charles Anthony of Hohenzollern at Düsseldorf that there was a fair prospect of the Spanish throne (if vacant) for his eldest son, the Hereditary Prince Leopold, or for his youngest, Prince Frederick. The Portuguese connexion of Prince Leopold, through his wife, has been already noted[1]. In September 1868, Queen Isabella of Spain fled across the frontier; and, after a series of vicissitudes, a monarchical constitution having been approved by the Cortes and a provisional Government established under Marshal Serrano, with General Prim as Minister of War, the Cortes was preparing to meet for settling the choice of sovereign. Among the possible candidates mentioned were the Duc de Montpensier, Queen Isabella's brother-in-law, the titular King Ferdinand (formerly King-Consort) of Portugal, and his son-in-law, Prince Leopold of Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen.

The last name was, in the autumn of 1868, incidentally discussed in this connexion in the unofficial press of Germany and other countries; and, though the Prince's journey to Spain in October seems to have been a figment, a rumour that the Spanish crown was to be offered to him was in that month reported by Lord Augustus Loftus, who added that such a scheme would be viewed with disfavour at Paris. Soon afterwards, the *Kreuzzeitung* had news from Spain that Bismarck, who was said to be in favour

[1] p. 406, *ante*.

of the Prince's candidature, had brought about King Ferdinand's refusal. In December, a Viennese paper reported that the 'Duke of Putbus' had paid a visit to Vienna, which was concerned with the candidature of the Prince whose name was unpronounceable in Castile. The Hohenzollerns, however, had not themselves received any information as to the proposal, when (on December 9th) Prince Charles Anthony declared it most unadvisable, and certain to be disapproved by France. Portugal, rather than Prussia, was in the minds of the promoters of the idea of King Ferdinand's candidature, on which that of the Hohenzollern Prince was, more or less, grafted; and it was under the motto 'Gibraltar and Portugal' that in February 1869 Salazar, in an open letter to his electors, advocated the Iberian Union programme of 'Spain for Don Ferdinand, Iberia for his descendants' (beginning with the reigning King, Don Luis). But Ferdinand quickly made up his mind to decline, as did his son. Thus, the notion of Prince Leopold was now brought forward with renewed zeal, as that of an at least *quasi*-Portuguese candidate.

In March, Manuel Rancès y Villanueva, formerly Spanish envoy to Berlin, and now at Vienna, visited the Prussian capital, where he had two interviews with Bismarck, which Benedetti duly reported. Instructed by La Valette to enquire further, the French ambassador applied to the Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs, von Thile, who declared (according to Benedetti, on his word of honour) that the only communication made by Rancès to Bismarck had referred to the probability of the election of King Ferdinand by the Cortes; that, if he declined, the majority would be divided between the Dukes of Montpensier and Aosta; and that there never had been, and never could be, any question of the candidature of the Hohenzollern Prince. On Benedetti's repeating this at Paris (April) to Napoleon (who had formerly expressed himself in favour of King Ferdinand), the Emperor

observed that, while the Montpensier candidature, as that of an Orléans prince, was 'antidynastic,' and therefore, as only affecting himself, might be accepted by him, the Hohenzollern candidature, as essentially 'antinational,' would not be tolerated by France, and must be prevented. Instructed to communicate cautiously with Bismarck direct, Benedetti was at once (May) answered, that the sovereignty of Spain, in the hands of the Prince, could only be ephemeral and unsatisfactory; that, therefore, the King of Prussia would certainly abstain from advising him, if invited, to accept the candidature, and that this view was shared by the Prince's father, Prince Charles Anthony. When, however, Benedetti put it to Bismarck that the King would have absolutely to decide Prince Leopold's course of action, Bismarck gave no formal assurance that the King would in no case permit the Prince to defer to a vote of the Cortes. In the Cortes (June 12th) while expressing regret at the refusal of King Ferdinand, Prim declined to enter at present into the question of any other candidature.

So far, then, everything was tentative. Bismarck's eyes, of course, were open to what was happening and preparing in Spain—it was in the spring of this year that he had attached that tried political observer, Bernhardi (whose extraordinary versatility included an intimate knowledge of Spanish literature), to the legation there. But he had neither set on foot nor (so far as is known) as yet made up his mind to promote a candidature for the Spanish throne which (notwithstanding Napoleon's personal relations with Prince Leopold) could not but annoy France, and, if begun only to be withdrawn, must damage the prestige of Prussia. Again, he had abstained from contending that, though the King of Prussia as head of the house of Hohenzollern had no formal right to prohibit any but certain specific acts[1] on the part of one of its

[1] Cf. p. 407, *ante*.

princes, the latter might take so important a step as that of ascending a throne like the Spanish without the King's cognisance and approval.

In the autumn of 1869 begins the second act of the drama of the Hohenzollern candidature, of which the preliminary stages had, if the expression may be used, been managed by irresponsible personages. The most active of these, Salazar, whose patriotic motives there seems no reason for questioning, in September paid a visit to Prince Charles Anthony at his country-house of Weinburg in Switzerland, where his sons were staying with him. Coming from Vichy, Salazar had at Munich been joined by Werthern, whose company he required both as adviser and as interpreter. His object, as he told Werthern, was to make the acquaintance of Prince Leopold; but at Weinburg he was first introduced to Prince Charles, to whom he stated that the eyes of the Spanish people had been first directed to him, but from whom he received an equally polite refusal. He then came to business with Prince Leopold, who, without absolutely declining the proposed candidature, made his acceptance of the crown dependent upon certain conditions, including an unanimous election by the Cortes. Salazar was on the whole satisfied with the result of his visit, although he felt that the really important condition was the approval of King William, without which Prince Leopold was quite unlikely to act for himself, as (in a measure) his brother Charles had done in the case of Roumania. He, therefore, thought that the time was ripe for the issue of a second pamphlet, and, in October, published his *Soluciones de la cuestion dinástica*. Passing in review all other possible and impossible candidatures, he dwelt on the advantages to be found in that of the eldest Hohenzollern Prince—a soldier, of fit age, married to a Braganza, with children to make the succession safe, well-educated and intelligent, a Catholic and imbued with that

German Catholicism which understands how to ally religious faith with the spirit of progress. He was a kinsman of the royal families of Prussia and Belgium, as well as of that of Portugal, and a relation of the Emperor Napoleon; he did not belong to the principal branch of the house of Hohenzollern, and thus could not, like the Duc de Montpensier, involve Spain in international complications. But—there was no time to lose.

Bernhardi (of whose political doings in Spain little or nothing is known) must, of course, have soon come into touch with Salazar; and, in October 1869, the latter begged Werthern to keep Bismarck well informed of what was in progress in Spain. On the other hand, about the same time, Baron de Mercier, the French envoy at Madrid, informed his Government that he had made no secret to the Spanish Foreign Minister (Sagasta) as to the view which would be universally taken in France of a candidature certain to be regarded as that of a Prussian prince. But, so late as November 23rd, Prince Charles Anthony repeated his opinion that acceptance of the crown of Spain would be too grave a risk to run, before order and tranquillity had been completely restored in that country. In December 1869, and January 1870, while the secret was, for obvious reasons, carefully kept at Madrid and even the able Spanish envoy at Paris, Olózaga, was left uninformed, speculation matured into design, and Prim was gained over.

In February, Salazar took his departure for Berlin, with letters from Prim to the King of Prussia and Bismarck. On his way, he, though not in any official capacity, presented himself at Düsseldorf, whence, on the same day (February 25th), Prince Charles Anthony wrote to the King and the Chancellor. In his letter to the former, he asked for the royal decision as to the acceptance of the Spanish offer from the point of view of interests of state only, since, from any other, his son and he had resolved on declining.

And his letter to Bismarck was clearer still, for, while it stated that, in taking leave of Salazar, on his earlier visit, he had made the Emperor Napoleon's assent a necessary condition, it now designated the King's opinion alone as decisive, and added that, if this were in favour of Prince Leopold's entering upon this historic task, he (Prince Charles Anthony) would do everything in his power to induce his son to accept it. At the request of the King, who declared himself to have been wholly taken by surprise and to be *primâ facie* adverse to the proposal, Bismarck reported to him on the merits of the case. The statement weighed the *pros* and *cons* against one another in Cecilian fashion, and concluded in favour of acceptance as the best way of preserving peace with the least danger, and of gratifying Prussia's pride in her dynasty. The arguments used by Bismarck before the Hohenzollern succession had become a subject of contention between Prussia and France imperfectly correspond to his later statement[1] that he had at first thought of economic and pacific rather than of political results, feeling sure that no Spanish King, least of all one of foreign extraction, would be able to despatch a single regiment to the Pyrenees for the sake of Germany. We may credit his statement that he not only thought well of the Hohenzollern candidature, but saw no reason for expecting it to lead to complications with France, whose ruler was only now coming to disapprove it; but we can hardly accept his further assurance that he believed that King Leopold would be a guarantee to Spain of the friendship of France—so that the Hohenzollern candidature might almost have figured as a French one.

King William was not convinced by Bismarck's arguments, and refused to receive Salazar, but summoned the Hohenzollern Princes to Berlin. Prince Leopold, who appears to have arrived before his father, was left to form

[1] See *Gedanken und Erinnerungen*, vol. II, pp. 79 ff.

his own opinion, though the Crown-prince instinctively warned him against depending on Prussian aid in the future, should he accept the Spanish crown. On the arrival of Prince Charles Anthony in the capital, a dinner-party was given in his apartment in the Palace, preceded by a council held under the presidency of the King, at which, besides the Crown-prince, Princes Charles Anthony and Leopold, Bismarck, Roon, Moltke, Schleinitz, Thile and Delbrück—the guides of policy, the directors of action, and the advisers of ways and means—were present, and which, therefore, was a combination of family council and council of state. Prince Charles Anthony reported to his son in Roumania that, on this occasion, 'the unanimous decision of the counsellors was in favour of acceptance, as the fulfilment of a Prussian patriotic duty'; but that 'for many reasons, after a long struggle, Leopold declined.' No reference was made to France, except casually and after the council. We have it on King William's own authority that the Prince could not make up his mind to exchange his present position for an utter uncertainty, unless he had the distinct command of the King to accept; and this the King could not bring himself to give. It would seem that a special obstacle was found in certain provisions of the family statutes concerning the position of Prince Leopold in the entail as Hereditary Prince. These of course did not apply to the eligibility of his youngest brother, Prince Frederick; and to him the attention of their father, who was now warming to the scheme, at once shifted. But this young Prince, when found, declined, in his turn, to undertake the task (for which he seems to have had no particular qualification) except on the express command of the King, which the latter, again, was unwilling to give. The King's view was that it behoved him, in the case of either Prince, not to issue any order or express any wish for the acceptance of the Spanish offer, unless an inner voice bade them comply—a

characteristic turn of phrase, indicating that King William refused to make himself responsible for forcing the conscience of either.

Meanwhile, Bismarck was not content to let the matter drop or drift. Soon after the council, he sent out to Spain on a double, more or less secret, mission, Privy Councillor Lothar Bucher, for more than twenty years the best trusted agent of Bismarckian policy because he best understood it, and Major (afterwards General) von Versen, whose strange experiences in South America had familiarised him with the use of the Spanish tongue[1]. So late as April 22nd, Prince Charles Anthony, writing to his eldest son, had dwelt on the loss of a historic opportunity. But, doubtless under the influence of Bucher's reports, a change was gradually coming over the spirit of Prince Leopold, whose disinclination to accept the Spanish offer, as his father on May 23rd informed the Crown-prince, had diminished. On the 28th Bismarck (who had, shortly before, seen Versen) urged Prince Charles Anthony to take up the Spanish question again, and a week later (about June 5th), he paid a rapid visit from Varzin to Berlin, where he at last found time to excuse himself to Prim for having left unanswered a letter received from him in the preceding February, and hinted, in the postscript to his belated reply, that the Hohenzollern candidature—which Prim had never dropped —might again be taken up. At Salazar's request, Bucher

[1] That money was spent by these or other agents in Spain for promoting the Hohenzollern candidature, was asserted, on not very explicit evidence, by Sir Rowland Blennerhassett in an article on 'The Origin of the Franco-Prussian War' in *The National Review*, vol. XL (October 1902). Here it is stated that 'indications of this are likely to be found in the papers of the late Lord Acton, and proofs, if I am not mistaken, might be produced by a certain financial house I might name.'—The visit to Spain of Bucher and Versen (of whom the former had seen Prince Charles Anthony on his way out) was not known to Mercier.

had been again sent to Madrid, and everything was put in readiness.

On June 11th, Prim informed the Cortes that, after negotiations with King Ferdinand had come to a close, others had taken place with another most suitable candidate for the throne; but that, in consequence of the unsettled state of the country, they had not at present been brought to a conclusion. A week later, Salazar and Bucher succeeded in obtaining an interview with Prince Charles Anthony and the Hereditary Prince at Sigmaringen; and the result was a formal request on the part of Prince Leopold to King William to authorise his acceptance of the Spanish offer which, if declined, the agents had been authorised to carry to another address; a telegram from the King, 'Agreed' or 'Not Agreed' would, Prince Charles Anthony added, decide the matter.

The King, who had arrived at Ems on June 20th, accompanied by no representative of the Foreign Office but Abeken, exhibited some annoyance at the negotiations in Spain carried on 'behind his back' through Bucher (whom he disliked) by Bismarck. The latter, in return, wrote to Abeken that all he had done had been to send word to Spain that the King could not undertake to bring his influence to bear on the decision of the Hereditary Prince; and that, for the rest, he had withdrawn from the affair, which had caused him work and worry enough. But he had not taken his preliminary steps in vain. On June 21st, the King, having previously telegraphed 'Agreed' to Prince Charles Anthony, informed Prince Leopold that, since on maturer reflexion he felt a calling (*Vokation*) to accept the candidature, he (the King), though with a heavy heart, agreed to this acceptance. 'The future alone,' he solemnly added, 'can show whether we have fulfilled the will of God.' On the 23rd Salazar left Sigmaringen with Prince Leopold's affirmative reply. Information had been

sent from Berlin to Madrid that Salazar would return by July 9th; but, by a curious error in deciphering, this was read 'July 26th'; and the Cortes, which were to have sat on so as to hold the election, but could not be kept assembled so long, were adjourned to November. The secret had hitherto been well preserved; but, now, the chance had been lost of provoking an 'accomplished fact,' before the official Hohenzollern candidature had become the theme of discussion throughout Europe, and more especially in France. In a dispatch of the same date (June 23rd), Mercier made Gramont aware of his, still not very serious, suspicions; in another of the following day, he expressed more serious anxiety about the 'Prussian project, the snake in the grass,' and in a third, of the 25th, he adverted to Prim's desire to have 'a good talk' with the Emperor Napoleon.

So the eventful month of July 1870 arrived; and the series of events threatening the peace of Europe soon had to be counted by days. On the 3rd, Gramont, whose 'statesmanlike calm' impressed his colleague and nominal chief Ollivier, but who was himself in great anxiety, indignantly protested at both Madrid and Berlin against the objectionable candidature, which Prim declared to be, though naturally not very agreeable to the Emperor Napoleon, the result of no other eligible prince being discoverable in the entire *Almanach de Gotha*. On the 4th—and here we pass out of the region of frank sincerity—Thile informed Le Sourd, the French *chargé d'affaires* at Berlin, in reply to a 'non-official' enquiry, that the Prussian Government was absolutely ignorant of the whole affair, which had no existence for it; but Le Sourd, as well he might, remained sceptical. On the same evening, Werther had a conversation with Ollivier and Gramont, in which the latter categorically informed him that France would not tolerate the seating of the Prince of Hohenzollern or of any other Prussian prince on the throne of Spain. Werther

who was on his way to Ems, charged himself with this information, and set out before a telegram reached him bidding him delay. Meanwhile there had appeared, in the Paris semi-official *Constitutionnel*, a statement of the offer and acceptance of the candidature, accompanied by an expression of wonderment that the sceptre of Charles V should have been conferred upon a Prussian Prince, grandson of a Princess of the Murat family, whose name was so painfully remembered in Spain[1]. The flood of journalism was now let loose at Paris, Gramont, though desirous of British intervention with Prussia, being evidently bent on committing the French Government to prevention of the candidature. On the next day, he instructed General Fleury to use his influence at Petersburg in the same direction, and told Lord Lyons that France would not resign herself to what had taken place; 'and, when I say that, I mean that we shall not permit it, and that we shall use our whole strength to prevent it.'

On July 6th, a Ministerial Council was to assemble at St Cloud, in order, primarily, to settle the terms of the Government declaration expected, later in the day, in the Chamber of Deputies in reply to an interpellation on the Spanish difficulty announced by Cochéry. This occasion must be taken to make clear the policy of the Government. But, while Gramont's mind was, more or less, made up, it is clear from Ollivier's account, though he takes as much responsibility on himself as possible and asserts Gramont's draft declaration to have been strengthened rather than softened by himself and some of his colleagues, that his own policy still wavered between war and peace; and there can be no doubt that the same was the case with the Emperor's. Napoleon's hopes still rested on the Tsar, while Gramont was for holding to Austria,

[1] This allusion was, naturally enough, resented by the Emperor Napoleon.

with whom and Italy, as Napoleon made clear to him and Ollivier on this day, there existed no treaty, but only a 'permanent moral alliance.' Thus, with a feeling, on Gramont's part, that war with Prussia was inevitable and that France, well prepared as the Minister of War, Le Bœuf asseverated her to be, was called upon to wage it, but, on Ollivier's, that at least an appeal should be made to Europe which might still avert the conflict, the declaration was launched. It was received by the Chamber with eager and, except for a few radical criticisms, general applause. After stating that the negotiation as to the candidature had been concealed from the French Government, it culminated in the statement of the determination of that Government not to suffer a foreign State to unsettle the existing balance of power in Europe, by placing one of its Princes on the throne of Charles V, and at the same time to imperil the interests of France. The hope was expressed that the wisdom of the German, and the friendship of the Spanish, nation would avert such an attempt; otherwise, the Government would do its duty without hesitation and without weakness. No mention was made in this declaration of the supposed international principle that no scion of a great reigning house was free to ascend a foreign throne, or of Ollivier's other, and major, argument that, in any case, such an attempt was intolerable in view of the relations which had continued between France and Prussia since 1866. The head of the Government insisted that peace was its passionate wish, and its hope, if only France and the Assembly were unanimous in what they desired; and the warlike enthusiasm which at once spread from the Chamber to the capital, and thence to the country at large, showed their desire to be the humiliation of Prussia. King William had erred in thinking it possible that the excitement which had followed in France on the bursting of the bomb might

be allayed; while his regret had been justified that Prince Charles Anthony's advice to obtain the Emperor Napoleon's assent should have been overruled by Prim's desire for secrecy, and by Bismarck's opinion that a nation should be left free to choose its own King.

As the matter stood, after the French Ministerial declaration, Prim and the Spanish Government, though all they had done was to select a candidate for proposal to the Cortes, felt that they could not withdraw his name, which was now unfortunately publicly known, unless the King of Prussia refused his approval. On July 8th Salazar republished his *Soluciones*, with a refutation of the 'commonplaces' and 'follies' which had been bruited abroad against the Hohenzollern candidature. With the King of Prussia, therefore, the responsibility more than ever rested; and Gramont, in reply to Thile, declared it incredible that a Prussian prince (which of course Prince Leopold was only 'practically') could accept the Spanish crown without the authorisation of the King as head of his family, and urged King William to follow the example of the Emperor Napoleon in publicly disapproving the Neapolitan candidature of Prince N. L. C. Murat.

Thus, with the support of both the Austrian and the British Governments, it was hoped to induce the King of Prussia to bring about Prince Leopold's withdrawal, in face of the menaces of the declaration of July 6th. King William, who had taken the declaration in good temper, writing to his Queen that France could hardly make war upon Prussia because Spain looked for a King in a side-line of the Prussian royal house, thought that, perhaps, by a parliamentary manœuvre like that which had ousted Montpensier, the choice of Leopold of Hohenzollern might be prevented in the Cortes, with which result he (the King) would be pleased. But though he might privately disapprove, he could not publicly prohibit, the candidature in deference

to the will of France; and Lord Lyons could obtain no assurance of a royal disapproval through the Prussian *chargé d'affaires* at Paris. Meanwhile (most characteristically for Bismarck's press-*régime*), at Berlin the 'officious' journals were ordered to dwell on the inexpediency of discussing the Spanish succession before the Cortes had made its choice; while the 'non-officious' were to point out that the Spanish throne could not be disposed of at Berlin, and that at the bottom of the business was the wish of the Empress for a new war. On July 7th, Bismarck issued a diplomatic circular, stating that the succession to the Spanish throne was a question for Spain only, and that Prussia had no concern with it. This position, technically correct, would have rendered the existing difficulty insoluble, had it not been for the moderation shown by the King at Ems, which, while maintaining the Ministerial view, made the withdrawal of the candidature still possible.

On July 7th, Benedetti was ordered to Ems, on as ill-fated an errand as was ever imposed upon a diplomatist. He was, in the first instance, instructed to induce the King to bring about the withdrawal of Prince Leopold, if not by his command, by his advice. A subsequent dispatch narrowed this down to his obtaining, as the only response that would be held satisfactory and prevent war, the King's categorical assent to the statement that his Government (*sic*) disapproves the Prince's acceptance, which it orders him to recall, as having been signified without its permission. A reply merely leaving the Prince to himself was not to be taken as enough. This, together with other militant expressions in the dispatch, seemed anything but pacific; but Gramont seems really to have cherished a hope that the menacing tone which he enjoined Benedetti to take might secure peace—'*sinon, c'est la guerre.*' The British Government cannot have erred in holding that the military

preparations which were simultaneously in progress would place an amicable settlement out of the question.

Not the least difficulty at this crisis lay in the continued vacillations of the Emperor Napoleon. On July 9th, he told Gramont that it was not the Prince of Hohenzollern who should be influenced, but Prussia with whom France was at issue; yet he, nevertheless, induced the King of the Belgians to send a secret message to his Hohenzollern namesake, appealing to him to end the existing difficulty by an act of self-abnegation. The Italian ambassador at Paris, Nigra (who enjoyed much of Napoleon's confidence), exerted himself in the same direction; but no joint action of the Powers was at present possible. Beust's advice to the French Government, to prohibit Prince Leopold from passing through France and then prevent him forcibly from landing in Spain, can hardly have been serious; but he made it quite clear to the French ambassador at Vienna (de Cazaux), who wanted something from him besides advice—of which there 'was plenty to get from Great Britain'—that the Austro-Hungarian Government was unprepared to engage suddenly in a quarrel which did not concern it, and as to which it had not been consulted. A long Council of State held at Vienna on July 10th, in which Beust and Archduke Albrecht were for intervention, but Andrássy against, was adjourned by the Emperor Francis Joseph; and, on the following day, Beust plainly informed Metternich that no *casus belli* had arisen for Austria-Hungary, unless Russia were to side with Prussia.

On July 9th Benedetti had his first audience with the King at Ems. The French ambassador had been previously informed by Werther (now at Ems) that, as the King had not thought it possible to refuse Prince Leopold's wish to accept the Spanish candidature, so now it would be very difficult for him to invite the Prince to withdraw his name. The King stated that, on his arrival at Ems, the Prince

had asked his consent, when he had replied that he did not think he could hinder the Prince's intention; it was, however, as head of the family, and in no sense in his sovereign capacity, as King of Prussia, that he had been informed of the Prince's determination and, without consulting his Ministers, had given his assent: his Government had nothing to do with the transaction. Benedetti having permitted himself the observation that public opinion would regard this as a distinction without a difference, the King repeated that he could not recede from the position which he had, from the first, taken up, and that the efforts of the French Government had better be directed to an endeavour to decide the Spanish to abandon its project. Notwithstanding the King's adherence to the illusory position assumed by him, his intention was really pacific; for, if as sovereign he had no concern with the question, why should he have discussed it at all with the ambassador? And he closed the conversation by stating that he had communicated with Prince Leopold and his father, and that, if they were disposed to withdraw the acceptance of the candidature, he would approve this intention. Benedetti having (very properly) withdrawn, a short delay unavoidably followed; for Prince Charles Anthony was at Sigmaringen and Prince Leopold somewhere on the Lake of Constance (unless, indeed, he was hidden in the Sigmaringen neighbourhood), while, in the absence of a cipher, the telegraph could not be used. Gramont and others at Paris bore this delay with the utmost impatience, especially after the King, on meeting Benedetti again on the 10th, had signified that he had not yet heard from Sigmaringen.

But, on the same day, there arrived at the little Hohenzollern Court Strat, the Roumanian *chargé d'affaires* at Paris, who submitted to Prince Charles Anthony the French point of view and his own warnings. From the other side, the King of Prussia had sent Colonel von Stranz, with a

complete collection of dispatches and telegrams, and the news that the French Ministry—the King could not say whether the Emperor Napoleon—was resolved on war. On the same day, at St Cloud, Napoleon told Vimercati, the active Italian military *attaché* at Paris, that, if a Prussian withdrawal 'in any form' were obtained, there would be no war; and Gramont, more guardedly, authorised Lyons to report that, if Prince Leopold were now, on the advice of the King of Prussia, to withdraw, the whole affair would be at an end. The King further sent word to Sigmaringen that, though he declined himself to order Prince Leopold to withdraw, yet, should he do so, he might again depend on the royal 'Agreed.'

On the 11th, pending the arrival of news from Sigmaringen, a further conversation took place between the King and Benedetti, in which the former, pressed for a prompt decision, remarked that he was well aware of the military preparations in progress in France, and that, in his turn, he was making provision for not being taken by surprise[1]. Admirable as his temper was throughout these transactions, the King may have been momentarily thrown off his balance by being, as he wrote to the Queen, informed of Gramont's statement to Nigra that, unless Prussia withdrew the candidature, promised never to cross the Main, settled the North-Schleswig difficulty and *ceded Mainz*, war was inevitable. In the course of the interview, Benedetti went so far as to assert that the distinction between the King's action as head of the house of Hohenzollern and as sovereign of Prussia was not only unsatisfactory but unsound, inasmuch as he was head of the family because he was sovereign.

[1] As a matter of fact, the advice of Roon and his colleagues was followed, that no measures should be taken in advance, and that an immediate general mobilisation, in the event of a declaration of war, should be awaited.

But the King would make no promise till he had the information for which he was waiting.

As a matter of fact, Prince Charles Anthony was still hesitating, unwilling that his son should recede from his promise to Prim, and half-hoping that the Cortes might help him out of the difficulty by an insufficient vote. But Benedetti's hopes of a more rapid solution were high, till his dispatch describing his interview with the King was crossed by a telegram from Gramont, demanding that the King should *forbid* the Prince to persist in his candidature. More than this: in the Chamber, a strong disposition manifested itself to complicate the Hohenzollern question by raising that of the attitude of Prussia towards the Treaty of Prague, and to place her in the dilemma of having to choose between war or submission to a congress. In this motion, members of both Right and Left concurred, though its rashness was exposed by Thiers.

Thus it came to pass that, when the hoped-for solution was at last reached, it proved to be no solution at all. On July 12th, convinced by the representations of Strat[1] and his own reflexions, Prince Charles Anthony made up his mind to withdraw the candidature in his son's name. When the telegraphic announcement of this decision reached Gramont through Olózaga, the former was conferring with Werther, who had just arrived from Ems, and at once observed to him that, in his opinion, the withdrawal of Prince Leopold was a matter of secondary importance only. It should, he suggested, be supplemented by a letter from King William to the Emperor Napoleon, stating that, in authorising the Prince's acceptance, he had no thought

[1] It was due to Strat, the Prince wrote to his son Charles soon afterwards, that he 'published Leopold's renunciation twenty-four hours earlier, perhaps, than he should have done without Strat's urgent advice' (given in the Roumanian interest). *Reminiscences of King of Roumania* (Engl. ed.), p. 107.

of prejudicing the dignity of the French nation, and that he now associated himself with the withdrawal of the candidature, in the hope that any cause of discord between the two nations would be thus removed. Ollivier, who appeared during the interview, fell in with Gramont's proposal; and Werther, instead of at once referring home for instructions before undertaking to submit to the King the letter of apology drafted by Gramont, sent it on to Ems, although declining to telegraph it. As for the Emperor Napoleon, although he regarded the news as meaning peace, he felt sure that the French nation would be 'disappointed'; in other words, he was himself disappointed at the loss of so exceptionally good a cause of quarrel, and, as we are informed by Gramont, at once took counsel with him as to further demands. Ollivier, with scant presence of mind, showed a copy of the telegram to several deputies in the lobby of the *Corps Législatif*, so that the news spread at once in Paris and the stocks rose at the Bourse; but an open discussion in the Chamber was, with some difficulty, avoided. On the same day, however, Gramont telegraphed to Benedetti to see the King immediately, and state that it was necessary for him to associate himself with the withdrawal, and to give an assurance that he would not, in the future, authorise any resumption of the candidature. Thus, the final step in the process leading to war had been resolved on by the French Government, immediately after its outbreak seemed to have been averted. The possibility, which Gramont had mentioned, of Prince Leopold disavowing his father's withdrawal on his behalf was at an end, when, after his return to Sigmaringen on July 15th, the Prince took no step in this direction[1].

[1] The dispute between father and son on this occasion must be fictitious. No trace of subsequent coolness between the Prussian Court and the Hohenzollern Princes is discoverable; Prince Leopold and Prince Frederick served in the war, and their father did what he could as a non-combatant.

At Berlin, where, before the arrival of the Chancellor, a Ministerial Council had resolved to send Count Eulenburg (Minister of the Interior) to Ems and to inform the south-western Governments of the condition of affairs, Bismarck himself appeared on the scene on the afternoon of July 12th. The news of the King's continued conversations with Benedetti awaited him, and, resorting at once to his wonted *ultima ratio*, he telegraphed to the King that if his Majesty were again to receive Benedetti, he must tender his resignation. It is not quite clear whether this message, which shows Bismarck's apprehension that the King might in some measure yield to Benedetti's urgency, was sent before or after the sender had heard of the Hohenzollern withdrawal; it must of course have been sent before he had become acquainted with Werther's dispatch to the King, which he immediately forbade Abeken to lay before the King, but which the latter insisted on seeing.

On July 13th, a Ministerial Council was held at St Cloud under the Emperor's presidency, at which an impressive communication from Lord Granville was read, representing to the imperial Government the immense responsibility which it would incur, if it did not at once declare itself satisfied with the Hohenzollern withdrawal. The Minister of War, Le Bœuf, who had hitherto remained in the background, now pressed the calling in of the reservists, and the Emperor pronounced in favour of the proposal, allowing himself the unguarded, or ill-timed, remark: 'We have other complaints against Prussia besides the Hohenzollern affair.' But both Gramont and Ollivier, desirous of not yet reaching the *ultimatum* stage, deprecated immediate action[1]; and Le Bœuf's proposal was, for the moment, dropped.

[1] Ollivier says that, had Benedetti pointed out the inexpediency of insisting on guarantees for the future, he would have rendered a great public service. But it was the head of the Ministry who was most directly called upon to urge such a *caveat*.

On the other hand, the two Ministers and the majority of their colleagues agreed to insist on a declaration that the King would not permit the candidature to be at any time resumed. The Emperor Napoleon acceded to the conclusion of the Council—to the indignation, it would seem, of the Empress, and certainly to that of public opinion in Paris.

In the morning of the same day—the last of supreme moment in this strange series of transactions before the actual declaration of war—the King of Prussia met Benedetti on the public promenade at Ems. The King had previously sent a copy of a journal announcing the withdrawal to the ambassador, who had already received the news. Benedetti at once hastened to do his errand, telling the King that, while the withdrawal if approved by him would serve as a guarantee for the present, a promise on his part that he would not allow any later candidature of Prince Leopold was requisite as a guarantee for the future. The King absolutely refused to give any guarantee of the sort, and, when Benedetti continued ('almost impertinently,' as the King told Queen Augusta) to press him, put an end to the conversation with the remark that it was necessary for him to preserve to himself freedom of action. He would, however, send for Benedetti to communicate to him the Hohenzollern decision, so soon as he had heard from Sigmaringen. Later in the day, on receiving personal information of the withdrawal from Prince Charles Anthony, he forwarded it to Benedetti through his aide-de-camp Prince Radziwill, requesting the ambassador to telegraph to Gramont that the King considered the whole affair at an end. At Benedetti's request, the aide-de-camp was sent to him again, with the statement that the King entirely and unreservedly approved of the withdrawal. Benedetti having, hereupon, asked for another audience in order to have an opportunity of renewing his request for a guarantee

for the future, Radziwill was, for the third time, sent to him, with a message that the King had nothing further to say to him on the subject. Nothing remained for Benedetti but to make his farewell bow to the King at the station, on the eve of his departure for Berlin, and to hear from him a repetition of this decision. King William had throughout behaved with perfect firmness and self-control.

Meanwhile, Bismarck at Berlin was anxiously awaiting the progress of events. He had telegraphed to Werther his surprise at his dispatch, which he declined to lay officially before the King, and in his wrath had gone so far as to tell Lord Augustus Loftus that it had now become necessary for Prussia to demand a formal declaration from France, stating her to be contented by the withdrawal and willing to give satisfaction for her menaces. In the late afternoon of the same day (July 13th), as Moltke and Roon were gloomily sitting at Bismarck's table, relief came to him in an unexpected form—that of a telegram from Abeken at Ems, reproducing a letter to him from the King. This letter gave an account of the morning's meeting with Benedetti and the demand made on the King by the ambassador, adding that the King left it to Bismarck to decide whether this new demand and its rejection should not at once be made known to the Prussian embassies and legations, and in the press.

This was the 'Ems telegram'—the subject of so much commendation and so much censure, because of the altered form in which Bismarck, who had at once recognised his opportunity of making war a certainty, decided, with almost boisterous approval from Moltke and Roon, to publish it. Before altering the form of the telegram, Moltke, in reply to questions put to him by Bismarck, gave it as his opinion that immediate war would be more advantageous than delay. Bismarck, hereupon, made certain omissions—but not of essential facts—and contractions,

which, while changing the tone rather than the substance of the whole, unmistakably heightened the effect of the statement of Benedetti's urgency and the King's resistance. To describe this as 'forgery' is childish; and there was nothing in the altered telegram untrue to the spirit of the King's action[1], or to the indignation personally expressed by him even before he had read Werther's dispatch. Moreover, on the face of it, the King had left the question of the publication of the facts narrated by him to Bismarck's judgment, and had expressed no opinion as to the form which it should take. On the other hand, it cannot be gainsaid that the publication of the telegram in its condensed form was certainly calculated to add to an excitement in both France and Germany which had already made war between them all but inevitable; and Bismarck, convinced, by the French demand of a guarantee for the future, that 'the real object of France was to avenge Königgrätz,' had, with lightning rapidity, resolved to make the assurance of war, which Abeken's telegram brought home to him, doubly sure. He had long held the issue beyond doubt, and he preferred to have it sooner rather than later; since he knew that all was ready. Not only was Germany, from the north to the south-west, aflame with indignation at the insulting demand made upon King William; but in Paris the receipt of the Ems telegram as published by the Berlin official paper in the morning of July 14th, caused the French Government to abandon the last hopes of a pacific ending.

Gramont, then, whatever may have been his first expectations, had been foiled in his attempt to obtain from the King of Prussia his consent to furnish a 'guarantee for the future'; and, as he told Lyons, while there was no longer any difference with the Spanish Government, which had formally announced the withdrawal of the Hohenzollern

[1] The case is nowhere better put than by Lord E. Fitzmaurice, in *The Life of Lord Granville*, vol. II, p. 35.

candidature, 'from Prussia, France had obtained nothing, literally nothing.' And to obtain something from or through Prussia had all along been the purpose of the policy which he represented. The ground was giving way under his feet: the advice of Great Britain had throughout been clear and consistent against further demands; Gramont's trust in the Tsar was, at the best, a delusion; and Beust's consolation was that he had done what he could to dissuade the French Government from driving matters to an extreme.

On the 14th, Werther apprised Gramont that he had been severely censured for listening to and transmitting the French demands; and, in the afternoon, while the 'Ems telegram,' as officially published at Berlin, was becoming gradually known in Paris and the evening papers were expected to set public opinion on fire, a Ministerial Council was held in the Tuileries under the presidency of the Emperor, whom Gramont in the morning had found still in a state of indecision. After it had been resolved, in the first instance, to call out the reserves, and Le Bœuf had quitted the Council to issue the necessary orders, Gramont proposed the expedient of inviting a European congress[1] to confirm the (supposed) international principle that no prince of any great reigning house may accept a foreign throne; and the proposal, as formulated by Ollivier, was adopted. But at a second, or adjourned, Council held on the same evening, at which the Empress was present, Le Bœuf reappeared, and pointed out the discrepancy between the congress resolution and that calling out the reserves. A dispatch brought into the Council seems to have proved decisive; but what this dispatch was—whether a communication (such as Gramont states himself to have received *viâ* Vienna) of Bismarck's last conversation with Lord Augustus Loftus, or a message from Beust himself,

[1] The idea of a congress had been first suggested by the Emperor in the Ministerial Council held on the 13th, but speedily dropped.

which, after all, was of an encouraging nature—remains matter of conjecture only. Gramont and Ollivier were now charged with the drawing up of a bellicose declaration, to be laid before the Chambers on the 15th. Early on that day, it was read at a further Ministerial Council (at which the Empress was again present) and unanimously approved. This declaration, which was virtually a declaration of war, after refusing to admit the 'subtle' distinction between the King of Prussia's action, in the matter of the candidature, as 'head of the family' and as sovereign, referred to the moderate demand addressed to him, in equally moderate terms, by the French ambassador after the candidature had come to an end, to the King's refusal to see the ambassador again on the subject of this demand, and to the official communication of this refusal, by way of giving it unequivocal authority, to all the cabinets of Europe. Since any further attempt at conciliation would have been undignified and imprudent, the reserves had been called out, and the further steps would be taken necessary for safeguarding the interests, safety and honour of France. The declaration was enthusiastically acclaimed in the Senate; in the *Corps Législatif*, where the Government demanded a credit of 50 million francs, Thiers's powerful (though egotistical) speech, declining to join in the responsibility for an ill-justified war, was answered by Ollivier, who declared that he and his colleagues accepted the great responsibility thrust upon them with an easy mind (*cœur léger*)[1]. Jules Favre's amendment (a demand for papers) was rejected by 159 to 84 votes; and, at an evening sitting, the Government having meanwhile submitted certain papers to a committee, its proposals as to mobilisation and credit were unanimously carried. On the next morning, Rouher organised a deputation of the Senate to the Emperor, who showed little

[1] See Ollivier's explanation and defence of his phrase, vol. XIV, p. 620.

of the confidence displayed by the Empress; a counter-demonstration near the Porte St Martin proved a failure.

From this date onwards, nothing could have stopped the war. The unrestrained fury of the Parisian press had hastened its outbreak even more effectively than the prompt action of Bismarck. On July 14th, Lord Granville had suggested to the two Governments that, if France would waive the 'guarantee for the future,' the King of Prussia might perhaps be willing to communicate to the French Government his approval of the withdrawal of Prince Leopold's candidature. Informally, he had already signified this, and perhaps he might now have agreed to a formal repetition; but Bismarck would have none of it, and Gramont likewise refused. Hereupon, on the 15th, Granville made a last attempt by proposing that the two Powers should have recourse to the good offices of a friendly Power, under the provisions of the Paris protocol of 1856; but Gramont refused this office also, inasmuch as the question involved was one of honour. It is extremely doubtful whether Lord Clarendon himself, the originator of this memorable protocol, could have done more on the present occasion.

On July 15th, King William had reached Berlin, where he was received with general enthusiasm, the Crown-prince, Bismarck, Moltke and Roon having met him at Brandenburg. Before the King could leave the Berlin railway-station, he had given orders for the mobilisation of the entire army—not, as he had at first intended, of the Western army only. This order, Prussia's answer to the French declaration of the same day, was published at Berlin on the next, when Bismarck went out of his way to furnish to the *Bundesrat* a statement of the case, as admitting of no choice between war and the proffer by France of a satisfactory guarantee against the repetition of her menaces to the peace and prosperity of Europe. The Chancellor's statement was promptly approved by the plenipotentiary of Saxony and

those of the other confederate states. At Munich, where a debate on military expenditure had been in progress from July 13th to 15th, mobilisation was ordered on the same day as at Berlin; but it was not till the 18th, after King Lewis had made one of his rare descents upon the capital, that his Government pronounced a *casus foederis* to have arisen, which the 'German' or 'patriotic' party, led by Jörg, had to the last denied. A credit of 5,600,000 florins with a supplementary estimate for the period of the war was voted in the Chamber of Deputies by a majority of 101 to 47, amidst much public enthusiasm, and unanimously approved in the Upper Chamber, after a speech from Hohenlohe, on the 20th. We need not enquire too closely into the mixed motives which at this stage actuated the King and his Government, and upon which the subsequent course of events was to throw more light. In Württemberg, the vote of credit was all but unanimous, and even the *grossdeutsch* fraction contented itself with an explanation of its affirmative. In Baden, where Grand-duke Frederick refused to let the action of his Government depend on the establishment of a *casus foederis*, and repudiated all ideas of territorial aggrandisement, it was not even thought worth while to assemble the diet. The information which, on the French demand for further guarantees becoming known, the able French envoy at Stuttgart, Saint-Vallier, had given to Gramont, that the neutrality of the German south-west could no longer be counted on, had proved correct, and the belief that these states would never go to war on a purely dynastic question a hallucination.

On July 18th, Bismarck, in a circular to the diplomatic representatives of the North-German Confederation, pointed out that the 'Ems telegram' communicated to them was simply a statement of the way, firm but courteous, in which the King had declined an arrogant demand, and thought it worth while to add that his own knowledge of Prince

Leopold's candidature had been wholly private. On the 20th, the North-German *Reichstag* met, and Bismarck informed it that the first and sole notification by the French Government to the North-German Confederation was an extract from the declaration laid before the French Chambers on the 15th, transmitted by Le Sourd on the 19th. On this communication, which must be regarded as the French declaration of war, there followed—first, another circular in which Gramont asserted the Ems negotiations to have been necessitated by Thile's statement to Le Sourd (which the former could not remember) that the Prussian Government knew nothing about the transactions as to the candidature with Prince Leopold or their result; and, finally, the Emperor Napoleon's manifesto of July 23rd, proclaiming that France was carrying on no war against Germany, whose independence she respected. Bismarck's answer, designed to uproot all trust in France, was the publication, in *The Times* of the 25th, of the draft agreement of August 1866[1] France seemed to stand convicted, and she stood alone.

The declarations of neutrality which followed on the part of the other European Powers, were, as a matter of course, strictly speaking, subsequent to the declaration of war; but it may be convenient to advert to them here, as they connect themselves closely with the circumstances of its outbreak. From Great Britain, notwithstanding

[1] See p. 384 and note, *ante*, and cf. Ollivier's contention (vol. xv, pp. 383 ff.), hardly to be gainsaid, that Bismarck, in his circular of July 29th, designedly postdated the draft to the middle or latter part of 1867. On the same occasion, Bismarck stated that, had it not been for this publication, France would, on the completion of the armaments on both sides, have made an offer to Prussia that, after the first battle, peace should be concluded between the two Powers at the expense of Belgium. See, as to this ultimate 'secret of Napoleonic policy,' and its bearing upon the proposed French alliance with Austria and Italy, Delbrück, pp. 20 ff., and Egelhaaf, *Bismarck*, p. 254.

Gramont's assertion of her admission of the justice of the French case, no support was to be expected; and the British declaration of neutrality (July 19th) was supplemented (on August 9th) by treaties between Great Britain and the two belligerent Powers, furnishing to Belgium a new and special guarantee of her territorial integrity. While maintaining all the guarantees of the Treaty of 1839, Russia—apart from the personal promise of a benevolent neutrality made by the Tsar to his uncle—would have found the security of her Polish frontier seriously imperilled had Prussia been defeated by France; and her great design (which played a most important part in the existing political situation and was encouraged by the renewal of the guarantee of Belgian neutrality), of putting an end to the closing of the Black Sea, might have been thwarted. She not only, on July 18th, declared her neutrality; but she succeeded, even before the British Government had intervened in the same sense, in preventing Denmark from running the risk of a French alliance. Denmark declared her neutrality (July 25th), and Sweden within a few days followed suit. Spain, where Prim no longer exercised a supreme control, did the same, together with the lesser states, whose neutrality was a matter of course; the Sultan alone enquired from the Emperor Napoleon whither the Turkish armies should be despatched.

More serious was the danger which, though the eleventh hour had passed, threatened Prussia and her allies from the long discussed scheme of an alliance with France on the part of Austria-Hungary and Italy.

On July 15th a meeting to this end had been held at Paris between Metternich and Nigra, assisted respectively by Vitzthum and Vimercati; when the conclusion had been reached to summon Prussia to observe in Germany the provisions of the Treaty of Prague, and, in the certain case of her refusal, to join in an advance in southern

Germany. But no such action could take place, because of the time required for mobilisation; and it was, therefore, in Beust's opinion, above all desirable to gain time. At a Crown Council held at Vienna on July 18th, attended by the Presidents of both the Austrian and the Hungarian Ministry, Beust proposed to carry on for the present a waiting policy, placing, however, the army in what was termed half-readiness for war. But Andrássy's counter-proposal of declaring neutrality, while making the military preparations which were in any case necessary, was approved by the Emperor Francis Joseph and the Council. Beust was reduced to making the best explanations he could in a private letter to Metternich, in which he further suggested that Italy's accession to the still contemplated triple alliance should be secured by the recall of the French troops from Rome. A day or two earlier, the Emperor Napoleon had actually made the same proposal to King Victor Emmanuel, but on condition that the Italian Government would allow no encroachment on the Papal dominions, in accordance with the Treaty of September 15th, 1864. To this requirement the Italian Ministry was absolutely opposed; for, while some Italian politicians favoured, and others shunned, the French alliance, the hearts of all were set upon Rome. The result was that, on July 24th, Italy, too, with the King's acquiescence, declared her neutrality; and, when, in August, the French troops were withdrawn from Rome, the hour had passed. The maintenance of the Temporal Power, as Prince Napoleon chose to put it, cost France Alsace and Lorraine. In July, the negotiations referred to had not yet been broken off; but the device of an Austro-Italian armed neutrality, which might have been capable of later development, had it not been restricted by a 'so soon as possible' clause, came to naught. Victor Emmanuel's endeavours had, in fact, been frustrated by Austro-Hungary, just as Austrian 'velleities' had been blocked by the well-under-

stood attitude of Russia. The resumption by the Italian, and the approval by the British, Government, in a new form, of the idea of the so-called 'League of Neutrals' first suggested by Visconti-Venosta so early as July 15th, were consequent upon the German victories of August 6th, and therefore belong to the history of the war itself.

Lord Lyons was, no doubt, right in his belief that the Franco-German War was not a foregone conclusion on the part of Prussia, and in his certainty that it was not such on the part of France. This means that the Hohenzollern candidature, though not originated by Prussia, only gradually became Prussia's opportunity, which, when once he saw it, Bismarck was resolved not to lose. It likewise means that it was the excitement of French self-consciousness which drove the Emperor Napoleon and his advisers—Gramont above all—into the fatal error of not accepting the withdrawal of the candidature as a settlement. But it does not mean that, from 1866 onwards, either Prussia and her adherents in Germany or predominant public opinion in France—for of accumulated historical feelings we are not here speaking—had come to the conclusion that, sooner or later, war between them must be. Prussian politicians, and those who thought with them in Germany, were gradually adopting Bismarck's view that without a national war with France German unity would not be accomplished. And the self-consciousness of the French nation might, if suddenly set on edge, demand a satisfaction such as nothing but a victorious war with Prussia could provide, and the weakness of the dynasty on the imperial throne would prove unable to resist. Great national wars—for the very reason that they are national—are among those which the world's experience has not yet discovered the means of averting.

CHAPTER VII

THE FRANCO-GERMAN WAR

1870–1

I

The battle of Königgrätz and the Treaty of Prague won the confidence of the people of Prussia for King William and his Government and were the justification of Prussia's claim to lead a united Germany. The King's reliance upon the statesmanship of Bismarck and the generalship of Moltke was confirmed. Moreover, the establishment of Prussia's supremacy in Germany was followed by a great increase of her forces.

To the nine army corps of 1866 were added three fresh corps raised in the annexed provinces of Schleswig-Holstein, Hanover and Electoral Hesse; the Saxon army had become an army corps; the grand-duchy of Hesse supplied a division. The forces of south-western Germany, placed by treaty at Prussia's disposal, consisted of two army corps from Bavaria and a division each from Württemberg and Baden. Thus, the nine army corps of 1866 had, by 1870, become sixteen and a half. The artillery, which had been inferior to that of Austria, was completely armed with rifled breech-loading guns. The expansion of the army had given exceptional opportunities for promotion, of which advantage had been taken to advance those who had given proofs of capacity in 1866. Mobilisation and railway

transport had been so much accelerated that an army corps would be ready for movement on the tenth day and could be conveyed to the frontier on a single-track line in five, on a double-track line in three and a half, days. In 1866, it had been a great achievement to place a quarter of a million men on the Austrian frontier in five weeks. In 1870, the arrangements admitted of assembling half a million men on the French frontier in three weeks.

For thirty years Moltke had been thinking out a war with France. In an essay published in 1841 and entitled *The Question of the Western Frontier*, he wrote:

> All the territory that France has gained on her eastern borders since the 13th century has been robbed from Germany; all the lands of Burgundy and Lorraine are our ancient possessions unlawfully stolen by France....If language marks the natural borders of a nation, the whole Rhine on its left as well as its right bank belongs to us and we are entitled to demand Alsace and Lorraine....The last treaties no doubt have given their sanction to the illegal possession of Alsace and Lorraine by France; but, if she should break them and begin a war...we ought not to sheathe the sword until we have obtained our whole right and France paid us her whole debt.

This meant a war which should end by the German Government dictating its own terms. Before that could be possible, France must be disarmed and helpless, her armies destroyed and her capital occupied. Such was the programme that Moltke set before himself. But an invasion of France must start from a secure Germany. Where should the German army be assembled in order to protect Prussia and the rest of Germany? Undoubtedly, at Mainz; for there a Prussian army would cover its own communications with Berlin and would be able to strike in time either on the flank of a French army marching towards the Lower Rhine and the fortresses of Coblenz, Cologne and Wesel, or on the communications of a French army invading south Germany. France would hardly be able to put into the field an army of more than 250,000 men. The Emperor

Napoleon would not be likely to violate the neutrality of Switzerland or of Belgium, as that would absorb a part of his forces; he would be compelled by the lie of the French railway-lines to assemble his troops at Metz and at Strassburg. Moltke, therefore, proposed to collect all the forces of the North-German Confederation and south-western Germany to the south of Mainz, between the Moselle and the Rhine. When they were ready, they would advance towards the Moselle above Metz, and would be sure in a few days to meet the French forces. After defeating them, the German army would march upon Paris. The defeat of the French army in the field and the occupation of Paris would enable the King of Prussia to dictate his terms of peace.

The military institutions of Prussia in 1870 were the direct outcome of those created by Scharnhorst for the struggle against Napoleon. The Prussian leaders found their inspiration in the traditions of the Napoleonic wars. France, on the other hand, had perforce broken with her past in respect both of her military institutions and of her military traditions. The first act of the restored Bourbon monarchy had been, at the prompting of the Allies, to disband Napoleon's army, to abolish conscription and to form a new army on the basis of voluntary enlistment. But military service was not popular; and, in 1818, the system had to be reconstituted under the auspices of Marshal Gouvion St Cyr, and it was again remodelled in 1832 by Marshal Soult. The system of 1832 was a combination of voluntary enlistment with a conscription, by which the men of military age drew numbers in a lottery. Those who drew 'good' numbers were exempt from military service and those who drew 'bad' ones were required to serve for seven years with the colours. A recruit who drew a 'bad' number was allowed to pay a substitute to take his place,

but remained responsible during the seven years for its being filled. The system produced good troops, for the men, on leaving their families for seven years, learnt to look on their regiments as their homes. Many soldiers renewed their engagements and made excellent non-commissioned officers. But the practice of paid substitutes made the upper and middle classes strangers to the army, and soldiers became a class apart. This separation between the nation and the army was increased when, in 1854, Napoleon III permitted those who drew 'bad' numbers to buy exoneration from service by a money-payment in return for which the Government undertook to find and pay a substitute.

The expedition of 1830 to Algeria was the beginning of an almost continuous series of campaigns in that country, which, in the absence of regular manœuvres in France, became the training ground of the French army. It was a school in which the troops grew hardened to marching and campaigning and the officers had scope for courage and presence of mind. But the conditions of campaigning in a sparsely populated country without roads, where the enemy was not an army but a half-civilised warlike population, without artillery, were widely different from those of warfare against regular armies in Europe. As a rule, officers in Algeria found it sufficient to rely on courage, coolness and improvisation—the characteristic precept was *débrouillez-vous*. The study of war languished; and the idea that there was anything to be learned except by personal experience grew unfamiliar. Governors and generals were tempted to magnify the importance of the engagements which they had to report. Every action not too discreditable was announced as a victory; and the officers mentioned in dispatches were promoted and decorated. The door was thus opened not only for merit, but also too often for personal ambition, for patronage and for intrigue; and reputations and careers were often built up on slender

foundations of achievement. The Crimean War revealed excellent troops, but a generalship that had forgotten the ways of Napoleon and his marshals. The campaign of 1859 in Italy showed an army that did not know how to move its masses; after the victory at Magenta it could not advance faster than six or seven miles a day. The expedition to Mexico also displayed good qualities in the troops but no generalship. Yet its commander, Bazaine, came home as a popular hero.

Napoleon III was prompted by a perhaps sound instinct to resist the aggrandisement of Prussia[1]. But he had neither the strength of will nor the assured authority required to carry out that purpose. In 1866, his army had not been ready for a war, in cooperation with Austria, against Prussia; and during the subsequent years, though he was fully informed by Colonel Stoffel, his military *attaché* at Berlin, concerning the organisation, the training and the strength of the Prussian army, he failed to insist upon the measures of preparation indispensable for war. Yet he persevered in the policy which was bound to lead to a conflict.

The military preparations were entrusted to Marshal Niel, whose recruiting law of 1868 aimed at the expansion of the army for war by the creation of a reserve. It altered the term of service from seven years to nine, of which only five were to be spent with the colours and the remaining four in the reserve. These terms applied to the greater part of each year's conscripts. The remainder, called the 'second portion,' joined the colours for a few weeks' training and then passed into the reserve. Those young men who were

[1] This instinct may seem to be justified by the words of Moltke written deliberately in 1881. 'The war of 1866 arose not from any necessity of self-defence against a menace to Prussia, nor from public opinion or the voice of the people. It was a conflict seen by the government to be necessary, long intended and quietly prepared... for POWER.' (Moltke, *Gesammelte Schriften und Denkwürdigkeiten*, vol. LII, p. 436.)

not conscripted and did not voluntarily enlist were enrolled in a 'mobile' national guard which was to be called up as a further reserve in the case of war. But the Chamber would not vote the money required for training the mobile guard; and in practice its men were called out only fifteen times a year, each time for one day only, which had to be spent in travelling to and from the place of assembly, in roll-calls and in the issue of equipment, so that the training could not be serious. Its officers and non-commissioned officers received no military education. Niel contemplated an army of 400,000 men with the colours, 400,000 in the reserve and 400,000 in the mobile guard; but at least five years must elapse before the reserve could attain to its full strength. In 1869, Niel died leaving his work unfinished, and was succeeded by Le Bœuf, made a marshal early in 1870, a gallant but not a highly instructed officer, who conciliated the Chamber by reducing Niel's estimates, especially those for the mobile national guard.

As a result of the reforms of 1868, France had, in July 1870, forces which, if judiciously employed, should have been sufficient to protect her. The regular army with its reserves numbered 535,000 men[1], and the mobile national guard could furnish men enough to raise the total to 900,000.

[1] *With the colours:*

A.	In depots and garrisons in France, Algeria and Italy	206,000
B.	With the regiments available for field service	162,000
Reserves:		
C.	Niel's reserve, which would increase each year but was in 1870 only	61,000
D.	Men of the Second Portion	112,000
	Total regular army	541,000

Unless some of the garrison troops were withdrawn for the field and the depots reduced, the available field-army would be composed of B, C and D, giving a total of 335,000.

But time would be needed to bring these forces into action; and, when time must be gained for preparation, the attitude ought to be defensive.

The French infantry was armed with the *chassepot*, a breech-loading rifle superior in range and accuracy to the Prussian needle-gun. The artillery had been rearmed in 1858 with rifled guns which were however muzzle-loading. In 1861 General Le Bœuf had suppressed all but two of the vent-holes in the time-fuses issued, so that the shells could be caused to burst only at the two specific ranges of 1500 and 3200 yards and were therefore ineffective against objects at ranges appreciably different from these. The twenty-four batteries of machine guns (*mitrailleuses*) produced in 1868 were an experiment. Their use in battle had not been thought out, and they were too often exposed to the Prussian artillery at ranges at which they were themselves ineffective. The Napoleonic conception of the use of artillery in masses had been forgotten.

In February 1870, Archduke Albrecht paid a visit to the Emperor Napoleon, who asked him for a plan of operation for the French, Austrian and Italian armies, in case of a joint war against the North-German Confederation[1]. The Archduke promised to prepare a plan; and, in June, Napoleon sent General Lebrun to Vienna, with returns to show that the French army would be able, with the troops of the active army, calculated at 400,000 men, to begin operations on the fifteenth day after a declaration of war. By the end of June, the plan was in the Emperor's hands. The Archduke assumed that the Austrian and Italian armies would require six weeks, and the Prussian army five, before they could be mobilised and assembled on the frontier. He proposed that the Emperor should form two armies; one in Lorraine, of three corps of three divisions each, the other in Alsace, of five corps of three divisions

[1] Cf. *ante*, pp. 414-5.

each. The first was to cross the Saar on the sixteenth day after the declaration of war and march towards Mainz, in order to draw against itself as large a part as possible of the enemy's forces. The second was to cross the Rhine near Strassburg and march by Stuttgart towards Nürnberg, where it was to meet the Austrian army, which would be ready on the Bohemian frontier six weeks after the declaration of war. On its way this French army would disarm the German states of the south-west. Austria would remain neutral until the end of the six weeks, by which time Italy would begin to invade Bavaria through Tyrol with 50,000 men.

This scheme was based on assumptions as to the time required to mobilise and concentrate the German forces, which the Emperor ought to have known to be inaccurate; for one of his staff-officers, Colonel Lewal, submitted a careful reckoning showing that the Prussian forces could be mobilised and concentrated in three weeks. But the Emperor Napoleon took the Archduke's plan seriously and made it the basis of his action. He thought that he could make up by speed what he lacked in strength, and that, by suddenly invading southern Germany, he might prevent the south-German contingents from joining the Prussian army, which he would turn to meet so soon as the south-German states had been dealt with. He hoped that success at the beginning would suffice to bring Austria and Italy into the field on his side. Accordingly, he would form the 300,000 men whom he thought to be at once available into three armies; one of 150,000 men at Metz, the second of 100,000 men at Strassburg and a third of 50,000 at the camp of Châlons-sur-Marne. On the sixteenth day the army of Metz would be relieved by the army of Châlons, and would join that of Alsace, and the two together would cross the Rhine and march upon Stuttgart.

This plan left out of consideration the possibilities of

a Prussian attack on France and the defensive action which might be imposed on the French army. It contemplated an invasion of Germany, to be undertaken with only one-third of the possible strength of France, and, even as to that force, took no account of the kind of preparations required. For the method contemplated was to begin at once the transport by railway of the regiments to the frontier, without their reservists, who were to be called out and sent to the depots to be equipped, after which they were to join their regiments on the frontier. This tardy and gradual arrival of reservists was inconsistent with the proposed prompt advance into Germany, and was sure to cause confusion, unless it had been fully and minutely prearranged; which was not the case.

Napoleon intended to keep the command-in-chief in his own hands and to have the assistance of Marshal Le Bœuf as chief of his staff. The army of Metz was to be placed under Marshal Bazaine, who had had the command in Mexico. The armies of Alsace and of Châlons were to be commanded by Marshal MacMahon, a brave and loyal officer, but hardly a strategist, and Marshal Canrobert, who had brought home a good reputation from the Crimea.

Since France was a maritime Power while the German navy was insignificant, it was part of the French plan to send a fleet with a landing force to the North German coast. But the army could not spare troops for embarcation; and, very soon, even the marines had to be landed in France to reinforce the land-army. French fleets arrived in the North Sea and the Baltic unhindered, and a blockade of German forts was undertaken, with limited success, at any rate in the Baltic. The Prussian Government told off sufficient forces for the protection of the coasts, along which elaborate defensive works were constructed. But no attempt was made to meet the French fleet, and the only action at sea during the war was an indecisive encounter

off Havana on November 9th between the Prussian gunboat *Meteor* and the French dispatch boat *Bouvet*.

When the crisis came in July, the reserve and second portion were called up, orders were given for the mobile guard of the frontier districts to be equipped and armed, and the levy of companies of *francstireurs* was authorised. Each regiment of the line was to leave behind four companies to form a fourth battalion, and two to form a depot, while the rest of the regiment went to the front.

The first movements began on July 16th. The regiments were sent by railway from their peace stations to eight points near the frontier, where they were to be formed into eight army corps, improvised for the occasion, and to be afterwards joined by their reservists and provided with transport, supplies and auxiliary services. No commanders of armies were appointed; but each of the three marshals who had been selected for command was to have an army corps of four divisions instead of three (the normal strength)[1].

[1] In 1870, in both the German and French armies, three battalions formed a regiment, two regiments a brigade, and two brigades with a rifle battalion a division. At the beginning of the war, the German battalions had their normal strength of about 1000 men. The French battalions had hardly reached a strength of 700 men by the 4th of August. A German division had 24 guns, a French division only 12 and 6 machine guns. A German division had a cavalry regiment, a French division none. A German army corps had two infantry divisions and a corps artillery of 36 guns, in five of the corps 48 guns. The French normal army corps had three divisions, the Guard only two, and the Ist, IIIrd and VIth each four. Each French army corps had a cavalry division and a reserve artillery of 48 guns. In the German army, the Guard and the XIIth (Saxon) corps each had a cavalry division, the two Bavarian army corps and the Baden and Württemberg divisions each a cavalry brigade. There were also five cavalry divisions, independent of army corps, under the orders of the commanders of armies. The French army had a cavalry reserve of 52 squadrons, grouped into three cavalry

The places chosen for assembling the several army corps corresponded to the plan of campaign. MacMahon's corps at Strassburg, with those of Douay at Belfort and de Failly at Bitche, might become the army of Alsace for the invasion of south Germany. Bazaine's corps at Metz, with those of Frossard at Saint Avold, of Ladmirault at Thionville, and the Guard corps under Bourbaki at Nancy, would constitute the army for the advance into the Palatinate, while the corps of Canrobert at Châlons would become the army of reserve. But these places were scattered along a line 240 miles long; and, before any offensive could be undertaken, the corps must be brought together into compact armies. That would occupy some days, and the whole plan depended upon promptitude in attack, its essence being an invasion of Germany before the German forces could be ready.

On the twelfth day, therefore, July 28th, Napoleon, after transferring the supreme authority to the Empress Eugénie as Regent, travelled by railway to Metz, to take command of the assembling forces, which he named the Army of the Rhine. On his arrival, he found that the strength of the eight army corps was not 300,000 men, but only 187,000, since the bulk of the reservists had not yet reached their regiments, that no magazines had been formed and that there were great deficiencies in the departments of supply and transport. The fortress of Metz was in no condition to sustain a siege. There was endless confusion on all the railway-lines, which were congested with troops and stores. The generals were struggling to bring order out of the chaos caused by the movement of the regiments before they had been brought up to full strength and made ready for the field. Moreover, the negotiations with Austria and Italy were beginning to show that both these Governments would be neutral, and that France would have to fight without

divisions. The new corps raised in France after September 4th had three divisions in each and battalions of 1000 men.

allies. The Emperor wrote to MacMahon, instructing him to undertake no movement for another week. A number of German patrols had crossed the frontier at various points; but the French cavalry had not been trained in reconnais-

Weissenburg to Gravelotte

sance and was not pushed beyond the frontier. No large bodies of German troops had been seen; and, though there were reports of the gathering of the German armies, they were not collated so as to yield a working hypothesis as to the distribution of the German forces.

By July 31st, the Guard corps had been brought from Nancy to Metz, and the corps of de Failly, Bazaine and Ladmirault were deployed from Bitche through Sarreguemines to Boulay and Bouzonville, along a front of 43 miles, with that of Frossard in front of the centre of this line about Forbach. These four corps had a total strength of, perhaps, 130,000 men. Napoleon was still thinking of his projected advance into the Palatinate, but in his hesitating frame of mind could decide on no more than a reconnaissance in force towards Saarbrücken. He entrusted the conduct of the operation to Bazaine, putting under his orders for the purpose the corps of Frossard and Ladmirault besides his own. Bazaine left the execution to Frossard, with his single corps of 28,000 men; and, on August 2nd, Frossard advanced to Saarbrücken. He was opposed only by a few Prussian outpost companies, which after a good resistance evacuated the town and disappeared in the country north of the Saar.

This was the end of Napoleon's offensive campaign; and he had no alternative plan. A number of reservists had joined the different regiments, so that, by August 4th, the whole eight corps had reached the strength of 267,000, of whom 96,000 belonged to the army of Alsace, 131,000 to that of Lorraine and 40,000 to the reserve at Châlons. But the corps were still independent units; no commanders of armies had been appointed, and no plan of action settled or communicated to those concerned. The army was still arranged in two separate and widespread groups of army corps. In Alsace, MacMahon had moved the four divisions of his own army corps towards a position chosen for defence between Niederbronn and Wörth, and had pushed forward part of one of them, under Abel Douay, to Weissenburg. Felix Douay's nearest division was at Colmar, 75 miles from Wörth; and de Failly had one of his divisions at Bitche, 14 miles from Wörth, and the others 20 miles away, at Sarreguemines.

The order for the mobilisation of all the forces of the North-German Confederation was issued at Berlin in the night of July 15th–16th. Similar orders were issued by the south-German Governments. The forces called out amounted to 519,000 men constituting the field-army and 323,000 forming garrisons, and supplementary reserves, the total number of men to whom rations were issued in August being 1,183,000. Of the field-army, sixteen army corps were destined for the invasion of France and one regular division, with four of *Landwehr*, for the defence of the coast against French attack by sea.

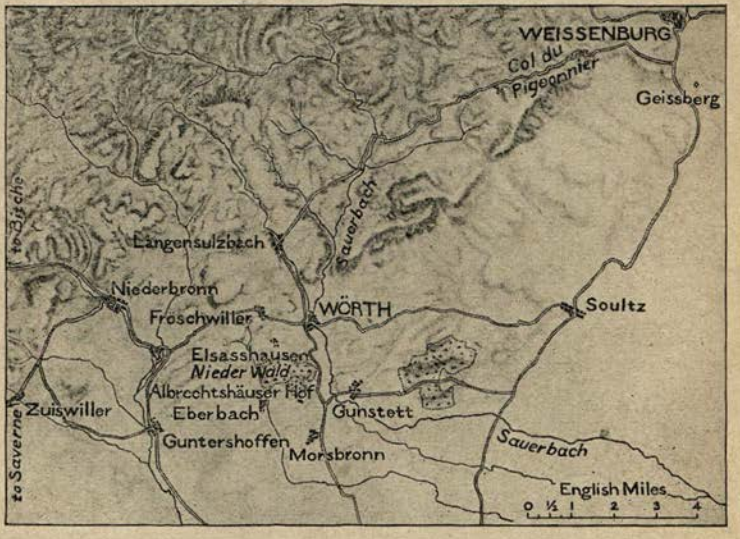
The mobilisation and railway transport, having been long prepared in every detail, were smoothly carried out according to the programme; and, on August 3rd, in less than three weeks from the first order, 385,000 men, thirteen out of sixteen army corps, with four cavalry divisions, were moving through the Palatinate and Rhenish Prussia towards the French frontier. On the right the corps of Westphalia and Rhenish Prussia, with a cavalry division, 60,000 men in all, forming the First army under General von Steinmetz, the victor of Nachod, had advanced from Trier to within a day's march of Saarbrücken and Merzig on the Saar. On the left, the troops of the south-German states, with the army corps from Posen and Hesse and a cavalry division, forming the Third army, 131,000 strong, under the Crown-prince of Prussia, lay between Landau and the frontier of Alsace, which followed the stream of the Lauter. The Second army, consisting of six army corps and two cavalry divisions, 194,000 men, commanded by Prince Frederick Charles, which had been detrained for the most part on the Rhine between Bingen and Worms, was marching towards the Saar above Saarbrücken, its leading division being two marches distant from that river and its rear divisions two marches behind.

On August 2nd, the day of the demonstration at

Saarbrücken, the King of Prussia, with his headquarters, arrived at Mainz. Moltke expected his First and Second armies to reach the Saar in full strength by August 9th, when he intended the Third army to deploy upon the upper course of that river; so that, if the French stood on the Saar, he could on that day attack them in front with the Second army, on their left with the First and on their right flank with the Third, which was to detach a sufficient force against MacMahon in case he remained in Alsace. Accordingly, on August 3rd, Moltke instructed the Third army to begin its advance, thus allowing it six days in which to move through the Vosges to the Upper Saar.

On August 4th, the Crown-prince set his 130,000 men on the march across the frontier. Three of his army corps converged upon Weissenburg, where Abel Douay had posted his 5000 men, out of reach of support and with no instructions to fall back if attacked by a superior force. The Bavarian corps, the first to reach the ground, attacked Weissenburg from the north and met with strong resistance; but, when the French right was attacked by two more corps coming from the east, Douay decided to retire, but was killed after giving the order. The retirement, however, was carried out under cover of a handful of French troops, who threw themselves into the *château* on the Geissberg protecting the right flank, and held it against the greater part of an army corps, until they were overpowered by the German artillery. A battalion in Weissenburg was surrounded and captured after desperate resistance. The remnant of the division made its way to Wörth, leaving behind 1000 killed and wounded and 1000 prisoners. MacMahon, on hearing of the engagement in the morning, had set out towards the battlefield and reached the Col du Pigeonnier, from which he had a view of the action. He estimated the German forces which he saw at 80,000 men.

The news of the battle of Weissenburg ought to have convinced Napoleon that the German army was ready and was taking the offensive, that his plan for the invasion of southern Germany was impracticable, and that he must lose no time in disposing his forces for defence, not necessarily passive. But he had now no plan and felt unequal to the situation. On August 5th, he telegraphed



Weissenburg and Wörth

instructions to MacMahon to take command of the corps of de Failly and Felix Douay besides his own, but gave him no instructions. It would have been prudent for MacMahon to avoid battle until he had collected his three corps; but he took counsel only from his courage. He sent for one of Felix Douay's divisions, but allowed the other two to remain in southern Alsace, because a German force was reported to be about to cross the Rhine and invade that district—

a German report spread to deceive the French. He ordered de Failly to bring his corps from Bitche to Wörth; but de Failly sent only one division, which made a late start on the 6th and did not reach Niederbronn, behind MacMahon's position, till the afternoon. Thus, MacMahon had with him altogether only 32,000 infantry, not quite 5000 cavalry, and 107 guns. The Crown-prince had moved forward from Weissenburg; and, on the evening of August 5th, three of his corps had their outposts in touch with the French, while the other two were within reach. He proposed to spend the 6th in moving his wing-corps into positions from which they could strike upon MacMahon's flank and rear, and to attack the French position on the 7th.

MacMahon determined, if attacked, to hold his ground. His position, on a low spur of the Vosges running north and south, was very strong on its three mile front. It crowned a slope overlooking the flat valley of the Sauerbach, a brook swift and deep enough to be only just fordable, and the *chassepot* bullets could sweep the slope and the flat quarter of a mile between its base and the brook. The left flank could be attacked only through the great woods to the north; but the right flank had no natural protection and could be approached over easy ground.

The action began, in the morning of August 6th, with a reconnaissance sent by General von Kirchbach, of the Vth corps, through Wörth village, to ascertain whether the French were retreating. When the French were found in position beyond the village the German party retired. But the Bavarians to the north, at Langensulzbach, had heard the firing and began to move against the French left; they broke off the action, however, by orders from the headquarters of the Crown-prince. Kirchbach, hearing the Bavarians engaged, ordered his corps to attack. When this became known to the Crown-prince, he determined to carry through the battle thus begun, and ordered up all his troops; for

they were all within reach. Neither Kirchbach nor the Bavarians were at first able to push back the French; but Kirchbach deployed 108 guns on the slope overlooking Wörth from the east; and, aided by their fire, his infantry made their way across the flat valley and pushed up the slope beyond. On the edge of the plateau crowning the slope they were stopped by the hail of bullets. Soon the XIth corps, coming up through Gunstett, joined in the attack on the French front, also deploying its artillery, under cover of which part of its troops moved round the French right flank and attacked from the south. They were able to take a farmstead called the Albrechtshäuser Hof, battered to pieces by the guns, and to push forward towards the Niederwald. But they were then charged by Michel's brigade of cavalry. The ground was covered with obstacles and ill-suited for such a charge; the horsemen were shot down by the needle-guns, and the brigade was virtually destroyed. Time was, however, gained for the French infantry to re-form their line along the edge of the Niederwald and to recover the Albrechtshäuser Hof. Fresh German troops came on, which took Eberbach; and, thus reinforced, the Germans rushed on and drove the French through and out of the Niederwald. The pressure thus brought upon the French flank enabled Kirchbach's troops to establish themselves on the plateau, and a combined attack of both German corps then put them in possession of the village of Elsasshausen. By this time a fresh Bavarian army corps had come up on the right of the Vth corps and was pushing back the French left, so that the centre of the French, their last position at Fröschwiller, was attacked at once from north, east and south. Again, MacMahon threw in a mass of cavalry, Bonnemains's division, which charged bravely in spite of the broken obstructed ground, of the deadly fire of the needle-guns and of the great semicircle of artillery. This brave division

shared the fate of Michel's brigade. MacMahon had used up all his troops, and all had fought desperately. His army was crushed. He gave word for the retreat to Saverne, ordering a last charge of a handful of his Algerian veterans to cover it; and, hereupon, what was left of his army escaped, as best it could, from the battlefield, covered against pursuit by the division of de Failly's corps, which had at last reached Niederbronn. The Crown-prince had not brought up his cavalry division, as he had not intended to fight on that day; so that MacMahon was able to make good his retreat through Saverne to Saarburg, where he was joined by de Failly's corps, which had also retreated from Bitche. The Crown-prince had lost 10,000 men. But, when MacMahon's rolls were called, there were 20,000 missing, of whom 9000 were prisoners, while 4000 had made their way to Strassburg and never rejoined their corps.

The plans of the Crown-prince, or of his mentor Blumenthal, had been marred by the eagerness of his corps-commanders, towards whom there had perhaps been too much reserve in the explanation of his intentions; but the result was, in any case, a great victory, which put the French army of Alsace out of action for the next fortnight.

On the same day, August 6th, the zeal of Steinmetz and his inability to grasp the nature of Moltke's design brought on a battle at Spicheren, contrary to Moltke's intention: Moltke meant to deploy the First and Second armies, not before August 9th, on the line of the Saar, the First army below Saarbrücken and the Second at and above that place. But Steinmetz had moved his corps too far to his left, and they were, on the night of August 5th, within a day's march of Saarbrücken, as was also the IIIrd corps of the Second army, the bulk of which was still far behind. A report that the French were retiring from Saarbrücken induced Steinmetz to direct his troops on August 6th,

towards that town and Völklingen, a few miles lower down the river. Frossard had, on August 5th, withdrawn his advanced troops from Saarbrücken and occupied a position on the hills overlooking the town from the south. Within nine or ten miles from his position were the four divisions of Bazaine's corps, 43,000 men, at points on the road from Sarreguemines to Saint-Avold; and within a short march from Saarlouis was the corps of General Ladmirault. The French knew that the Germans were approaching Saarbrücken. Bazaine had this information in the early morning and, a little later, received a request from Frossard for support, in expectation of which that general decided to hold his ground. The German attack was begun, about noon, by a division of the First army, which was sent forward against the position without reconnaissance, on the assumption that it was defended merely by a weak rearguard. This division made little impression and could hardly have withstood a counter-attack, which, however, Frossard, in expectation of reinforcements, postponed. In the afternoon, more German troops reached the field, a division of the Second army and another division of the First. Attack and defence were conducted with great courage and determination. The German artillery, always to the front and always well handled, enabled the German troops to gain ground on the French left and centre, though the French repulsed the German left wing. But the non-appearance of any reinforcements, the ever-growing numbers of the Germans and at last, about seven in the evening, the appearance of a fresh German division near Forbach, on the line of retreat to Saint-Avold, induced Frossard to retire towards Sarreguemines. The French had lost 4000, the Prussians nearly 6000 officers and men. Frossard received from Bazaine neither orders to fall back nor reinforcements; and he had, therefore, needlessly fought a rearguard action against somewhat superior numbers,

though he had retired in time to avoid being cut off or hampered in his withdrawal. But the Germans were entitled to regard his retreat as a victory for themselves, and the French were correspondingly depressed, especially when the news of MacMahon's disaster at Wörth arrived.

The defeat at Wörth, the subsequent precipitate and prolonged retreat, and the collapse of Spicheren, revealed the impotence of the authority directing the French armies. In Lorraine, the results were, first, that Napoleon ordered Bazaine to withdraw the army to a position behind the French Nied, a retirement which Bazaine's ignorance of the mechanism of movement of large bodies of troops rendered incredibly slow, confused and exhausting; secondly, that the Emperor began to think of a retreat to Châlons —he could not approve of Bazaine's idea of retreating to the plateau of La Haye behind the Meurthe between Frouard and Nancy—and, thirdly, that the Emperor realised his inability to command the army and was anxious to transfer its direction to stronger hands. On France the news fell like a thunderclap. Consternation spread everywhere. The empire had been synonymous with victory. Defeat removed its foundations. At Paris, where the news was known on the 8th, the Chamber met on the 9th and demanded a Government capable of providing for the defence of the country. The Ministry of Ollivier resigned; and the Empress entrusted the government to a Ministry formed by General Cousin de Montauban, Count of Palikao, an officer of no special capacity, who had commanded an expedition to China and been decorated in consequence. In the debate, hints had not been wanting that the defeats were due to the military incapacity of the Emperor and his chief of staff, Le Bœuf; and the wish had been expressed that the command should be given to Bazaine, the youngest Marshal, who was supposed to be a brilliant officer. The substance of these ideas and the wishes of the party-

leaders and journalists reached the Emperor, who, on the 11th, hurriedly withdrew the troops from the French Nied to the plateau commanded by the eastern forts of Metz, and on the 12th appointed Bazaine Commander-in-chief of the army. But, instead of giving Bazaine a free hand, he urged him to retreat at once to Châlons, a course which, while the Emperor remained with the army, Bazaine, though not convinced of its wisdom, could not frankly reject. On the 13th, he caused orders to be prepared for the retirement of the army through Metz to the plateau west of the fortress; but he did not allow them to be issued that day, and made no preparation to facilitate the movement either by sending off the waggon-trains in advance or by arrangements for crossing the bridges and for using all the available roads. By the 13th, the bulk of Canrobert's army corps from Châlons had reached Metz.

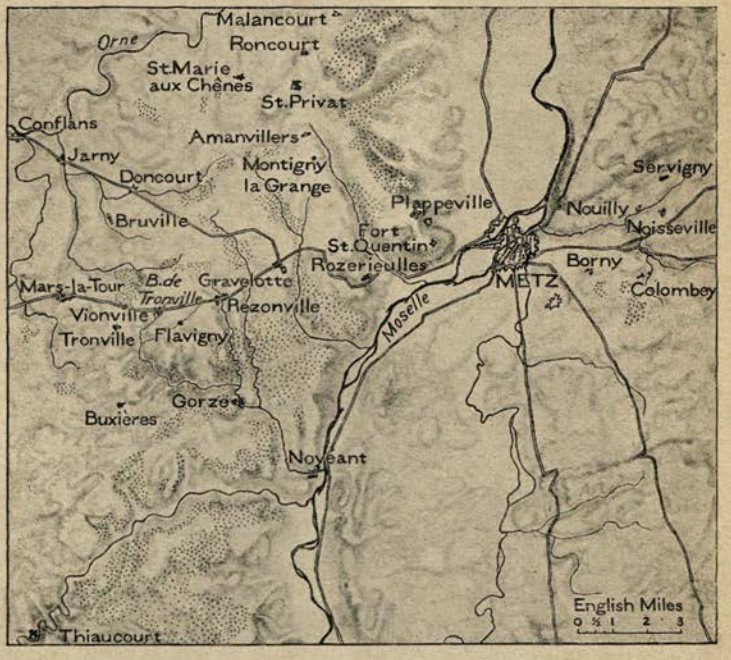
After the battle of Spicheren, Moltke ordered the victorious troops to halt and await the arrival of the First and Second armies, which reached the line of the Saar on August 9th. By that time, the last three of the sixteen German army corps had joined the field-armies; so that the First army now had three corps, the Second seven, and the Third six, the total force amounting to 484,000 men. There was no need, for the moment, to reckon with the army of MacMahon, which, continuing the retreat from Saarburg, reached Lunéville on the 12th. Hence, by Napoleon's orders, issued under the influence of a false report that the German troops were between his army and Metz, MacMahon continued his retreat westwards and took his troops by railway from Neufchateau to Châlons, where he arrived on August 17th, followed by de Failly's corps and, a day or two later, by Felix Douay's VIIth corps, brought round by railway from southern Alsace. On August 9th, Moltke directed the First and Second armies to resume their

forward movement on the 10th, the First army pushing its right wing towards Metz, while its left wing and the Second army were to swing round towards the Moselle south of Metz. The Third army would continue its advance in the direction of Nancy, and would act as a reserve and support in case of mishap. But, inasmuch as the French might make a counter-attack from Metz, the movements of the First army and the right wing of the Second were retarded until the course taken by the French should be known.

On August 14th, the French army was crossing the Moselle at Metz, in accordance with Bazaine's delayed orders; and, in the afternoon, four of its five corps were still on the eastern bank, with their rearguards in position about a mile and a half to the east of the eastern forts on the plateau of Borny, from a point south of Colombey to a point north of Nouilly. In this position the rearguards were attacked by the advance-guards of the German First army, assisted by the nearest division of the Second, which assailed the French right flank. Two of the French corps-commanders turned back to assist their rearguards; and thus began a battle in which the French, though their advanced posts were driven back, held their main positions till dark, when they resumed their interrupted retreat across the Moselle. Moltke was now relieved of the apprehension of a French counterstroke from Metz, and ordered the First and Second armies to cross the Moselle, keeping only a single army corps to watch Metz from the south-east and intending to continue the right wheel beyond the river, until the roads from Metz to Verdun were reached. He expected to find the French army on those roads, and meant to prevent its retreat to Verdun or Châlons.

A fortress astride of a river should give the defender a safe and easy passage from bank to bank, so that he may quickly collect his whole army on either and strike a blow

against the assailant, whose forces will necessarily be divided by the act of crossing the river. Prince Frederick Charles, by disregarding Moltke's instructions, gave Bazaine the opportunity of doing this. But Bazaine lacked the grasp of military operations, and his army the



Battles round Metz

suppleness of movement which would have enabled him to take advantage of the opening that was given him. On the evening of August 15th, four of the seven army corps of the German Second army had reached or crossed the Moselle, well above the fortress, on the stretch, sixteen miles long, between Novéant and Marbache. Instead of

ordering them all to march on the 16th towards the Metz—Verdun road and keeping them within supporting distance of one another, Prince Frederick Charles spread them out fanwise, as he did the cavalry divisions preceding them. This was an appropriate disposition of the cavalry, of which the function was reconnaissance, but not of the army corps, each of which it exposed to the risk of encountering, alone, the whole French army. The IVth corps he sent towards Toul, the Guards towards St Mihiel, the Xth corps from Pont-à-Mousson along the road towards Verdun, which does not approach the direct route from Metz until St Hilaire, twenty-five miles from that fortress; while the IIIrd corps was to march its two divisions by the roads leading through Gorze to Rezonville and, through Buxières, to Mars-la-Tour.

In and about Rezonville, the greater part of the French army was encamped. Its march towards Verdun had begun, according to Bazaine's orders, about noon on the 14th; and, if he had made use of the four roads at his disposal, the whole army might, by the afternoon of the 15th, have been on the plateau of Gravelotte where the high road to Verdun bifurcates. But Bazaine ordered all the five corps, 150,000 men, to follow the single high road to Gravelotte. Thirty-six hours were occupied by the cavalry and the corps of Frossard, Canrobert and Bourbaki in passing along this road; and it was midnight on the 15th before the Guard reached its destination near Gravelotte, and the other two corps their bivouacs about Rezonville, and the cavalry the village of Vionville. The corps of Le Bœuf and Ladmirault, on retiring from the battlefield of Borny, waited at Metz for the road to be free. On the 15th Le Bœuf set out by Amanvillers, which his leading division reached only by nightfall. Ladmirault did not start from Metz till the morning of the 16th, when he took the road through St Privat to Doncourt.

Napoleon had left Metz on the 15th and stayed at Gravelotte till the morning of the 16th, when he bade farewell to Bazaine, urging him to start as soon as possible, and then drove off by Conflans to Verdun. Bazaine, however, although his three corps were ready to start, determined to wait for the rest of the army, and ordered the tents to be pitched again and the horses watered. He had no intention of being caught by the enemy on the march at a distance from the fortress. He knew that German troops had crossed the Moselle above Metz, and had received reports of crossings below the fortress. The cavalry divisions in camp at Vionville had reported encounters with the German cavalry near Mars-la-Tour on the afternoon of the 15th, though they had not discovered that a whole German cavalry division was just beyond that place. No reconnaissance had been made, no position for defence chosen. The troops were encamped by divisions, to facilitate the resumption of the march, and were not covered by outposts. The men were at ease, under orders merely not to leave their camps. About 9.15 they were startled by the shelling of the cavalry camps at Vionville from the direction of Tronville and the infantry camps near Rezonville from a point a mile and a half further to the south.

One German cavalry division, sent by the Xth corps, had passed the night near Tronville, and another, sent by the IIIrd corps, had come up in the morning from beyond the Moselle through Gorze. It was the guns of these two cavalry divisions that aroused the French army. General von Alvensleben, commanding the IIIrd corps, was with the cavalry division he had sent forward; and, on learning that the French army was before him, he determined to attack it in order to prevent its marching away towards Verdun. He had at his disposal the 9000 horse of the two cavalry divisions and the 21,000 infantry of his own corps, and 114 guns. The Xth corps would help him. He knew that

these forces might be beaten and even crushed, but felt sure that the risk was worth running, to serve Moltke's purpose of preventing the retreat of the French army.

Alvensleben conducted the battle with skill and determination. He brought up all his artillery and deployed it on the line of which the two groups of horse artillery marked the ends. He attacked with his right infantry division through the great woods to the south of Rezonville, and with his left infantry division along the Verdun—Metz high road towards Rezonville. The French troops had occupied Vionville and Flavigny in their first advance after the morning's surprise. The Prussians, aided by their artillery, took first Vionville and then Flavigny. The French retook Flavigny, and then lost it again about half-past twelve. The troops of the righthand German division had soon pushed the French advanced troops out of the great woods and gained the edge of them; but beyond that they could not make way. All day long they tried to fight their way further; but, though here they received reinforcements equal to a whole division, all their attacks were repulsed by the French. By half-past twelve, Alvensleben's lefthand division was also engaged; and he had not a battalion or a battery in reserve. A charge of French cuirassiers against his centre failed; a countercharge of Prussian hussars produced no result, although it came near to capturing Marshal Bazaine. Alvensleben's righthand cavalry division set out to charge, but was stopped by the French bullets. Half a brigade of the Prussian Xth corps marched up from Thiaucourt and was thrown into the wood of Tronville on the German left; but Canrobert's guns were crushing the Prussian infantry line in front of the wood. Alvensleben ordered a cavalry brigade to charge the guns, and Colonel von Bredow, with 800 horse, starting from the east of the wood of Tronville, rode through an infantry line, sabred the gunners and charged through the infantry

behind them; then, seeing a mass of French cavalry approaching, turned and rode back, leaving 363 troopers on the ground. After this daring charge the French in this part of the field remained inactive for an hour. Hereupon, troops of Le Bœuf's corps having come from Amanvillers took the wood of Tronville. A fresh division of the Xth corps, which had marched up from Pont-à-Mousson, was sent into the wood and recovered it. Next, two divisions of Ladmirault's corps from Metz came up by St Privat to prolong Le Bœuf's line to the right, and deployed south of Bruville, threatening to turn Alvensleben's left. But the last brigade of the Prussian Xth corps, which had marched to St Hilaire, ten miles to the west, and then started to march again towards the sound of the guns, reached Tronville in time to be sent against Ladmirault. It was met by the close range fire of a long line of *chassepots*, and lost more than half of its 4000 men; its shattered remnant was saved only by the charge of a few squadrons which sacrificed themselves to cover the retreat. Ladmirault had but to press on, and the whole German line must retire. But a mass of German cavalry threatened his right flank, and he paused. His own cavalry came up from behind his flank to meet this new threat, and there was a great cavalry fight, in which each side claimed the advantage; but the net result was that Ladmirault's divisions stayed where they were.

It was now growing dark. Prince Frederick Charles, who had reached the battlefield, ordered a general attack; but the German troops were too much exhausted to deliver it. Each side remained in its positions. Bazaine had had on the field 100,000 infantry, 14,000 cavalry and over 400 guns. He had lost 13,000 men. Alvensleben had employed altogether 52,000 infantry, 10,000 cavalry and 228 guns, and had lost 16,000 men. His troops were worn out; they could hardly have resisted an attack next day. But he had fulfilled his purpose; he had barred the road to Verdun,

and gained time for Moltke to bring up an army. If Bazaine had made enough use of his cavalry on the 15th to enable him to form a true idea of the situation, and if he had been in earnest with the march to Verdun, he would have pressed the attacks of Canrobert, Le Bœuf and Ladmirault against the German left, would thereby have defeated Alvensleben and might have marched on, covered by a rearguard. But his chief anxiety was not to be cut off from Metz. He never went near his right wing nor sent any instructions to Le Bœuf or Ladmirault. He stayed all day at Rezonville and kept the bulk of the guard at Gravelotte, where there was no enemy; he even brought troops from his right to reinforce his unassailed left.

The Germans did not suppose that they had won the battle. They passed an anxious night, and their troops were kept so prudently quiet next morning that not even a cavalry reconnaissance was undertaken. It was a relief when the discovery was made that only French outposts were before them and that the French army had gone. Yet, even then, no step was taken to find out the direction of its movement. There was a skirmish with the French rearguard near Gravelotte, but it was not known whether the French army had retreated by Conflans and Briey or returned towards Metz. During the 17th, five army corps of the First and Second army reached the battlefield and were halted facing north, in a line eleven miles long, with its centre at Rezonville. Moltke issued orders that, on the 18th, the five fresh corps should advance in *échelon* from the left, followed by the IIIrd and Xth, which had fought on the 16th. If the French had gone north, he would try to keep to the west of them; if they had stayed in front of Metz, he would make a right wheel to attack them. By ten o'clock on the 18th the five corps stood on the line from near Rozerieulles to Jarny, their order from right to left being VIIth, VIIIth, IXth, Guards

and XIIth. By this time, French troops had been observed in position from Rozerieulles to Montigny la Grange, and the order was given for the Second army (IXth, Guards, XIIth) to wheel to its right and to begin the attack by moving against the French right flank, the First army (VIIth and VIIIth) to attack so soon as the Second should be engaged.

Montigny la Grange was not the French right flank. On the evening of the 16th, the French troops and their generals had been under the impression that they had that day won the battle of Rezonville or, as the Germans call it, of Vionville—Mars-la-Tour. But, late at night, Bazaine, to the surprise of those who knew of the plan to join Mac Mahon at Châlons, issued orders for a return towards Metz, to the plateau of Gravelotte—St Privat. Here, during the 17th, the army moved into a position extending from Rozerieulles to Roncourt, about seven miles, which was occupied, from left to right, by the corps of Frossard, Le Bœuf, Ladmirault and Canrobert, while the Guards (under Bourbaki) were kept by Bazaine some distance in the rear at Plappeville, where he remained himself all day. The ground was very favourable for defence, the troops being posted on the crest of slopes falling westwards, with an open field of fire commanding the ground in front, except in the centre, where woods covered the approach. The left flank, in front of Fort St Quentin, was protected by the guns of that fort.

Thus on the 18th the German IXth corps, making for Montigny la Grange, was striking not upon the French flank, but upon its well-prepared centre. The attack was begun about noon by the artillery of the IXth corps, deployed in front of Montigny la Grange. It was received by artillery and infantry fire which inflicted losses upon it; and the infantry, sent forward to attack, made no progress. This attack was at once followed by that of the VIIth and VIIIth corps from Gravelotte against the

French left. But here, too, the Prussians, though they reached the lower part of the slope on the crest of which the French were posted, could make no further progress, and spent the rest of the day in attacks which were repulsed with heavy loss,—even the last, delivered in the evening by the IInd corps, which had marched during the day from Pont-à-Mousson.

The French right held the village of Ste Marie-aux-Chênes, in front of their line, with a couple of battalions. These were driven out, about 3.30, by the Prussian Guards and some of the Saxon troops, while the Crown-prince of Saxony, with the bulk of his corps, marched along the valley of the Orne to turn the French right at Roncourt. Without waiting for this turning movement to develop or for a deliberate artillery bombardment, the Guards formed for attack in front of Ste Marie, and, about 5.30, advanced up the slope against St Privat. The advance broke down with heavy loss under the murderous fire of the *chassepot*. The whole attack on the front, from end to end of the line, had failed; and a capable commander-in-chief on the French side might have turned the repulse of the Germans into a defeat. But Bazaine did nothing. A division of the French Guards was taken by Bourbaki towards the French right wing, but brought back again without being engaged. About six o'clock, the Crown-prince of Saxony began to develop his flank attack, deploying his troops so that his left wing from Malancourt should come up behind the extreme right of the French at Roncourt. The handful of French at Roncourt were facing northwards, and the Saxons advanced towards them from the north, the north-east and the north-west, their way being prepared by the fire of many batteries. There was a panic among the French, which spread quickly, so that Roncourt was abandoned. Canrobert then formed a new flank, running east from St Privat. Thus St Privat became a salient. It was

bombarded by 150 guns in a semicircle; and, as the Saxons and the Guards advanced simultaneously, the village was taken and their combined troops moved southwards to roll up the French line, against which they brought 270 guns to bear. Canrobert withdrew his corps towards Metz, followed by Ladmirault, and, next morning, by the other two corps. Bazaine may have had 150,000 men and 428 guns; but the four corps engaged had not more than 126,000 men. The Germans had over 200,000 men and 726 guns. The French casualties were 13,000, and the German 20,000.

Bazaine was now in a difficult position, though, for a general in whom there were springs of action it would have been by no means hopeless. A commander who could look before and after might, on the 12th, have thought it wiser to cling to Metz than to attempt to reach Châlons, pursued by armies of more than twice his strength. But, in that case, he would have contrived, between the 12th and the 18th, to accumulate provisions at Metz. As things stood on the 18th, a good general would have found means to convey a true account of them to the Emperor, and could certainly, while leaving an ample garrison at Metz, have crushed the single German army corps which barred his way to Épinal. Not to attempt this was to acquiesce in an investment to which there could be only one ending; for an army once surrounded cannot escape except by success in an attack to which every circumstance is unfavourable. The enveloping army has no flanks; the enveloped assailant must present two; the attack must be frontal and give every advantage to the bullets and shells of the defence, which can daily strengthen its front by fortification.

On the morning of August 19th, Moltke, who perfectly grasped the situation, issued orders for a fresh campaign. Prince Frederick Charles was to invest Metz, which was to be under observation by 200,000 men—on the left bank of the Moselle six army corps, since

Bazaine must on no account be allowed to escape on that side, and on the right bank one army corps and a *Landwehr* division, brought up from Germany. The advance towards Paris was to be continued by the Third army and by a Fourth, called that of the Meuse, under the command of the Crown-prince of Saxony, composed of the Guards corps, the IVth and XIIth corps and two cavalry divisions. Till the 22nd, the troops of the Fourth army were to halt on the line Conflans—Commercy, and those of the Third army between the Ornain near Ligny-en-Barrois and the Meuse about Vaucouleurs. By the 21st, Moltke knew that a French army was assembling at Châlons, and on that day he instructed the Third and Fourth armies to begin their westward march on the 23rd, the Third keeping to the left, and a day's march in front, of the Fourth, his intention being to strike the army of Châlons by a concentric or enveloping attack from two directions—his ideal form of attack—and to drive it towards the north, away from Paris.

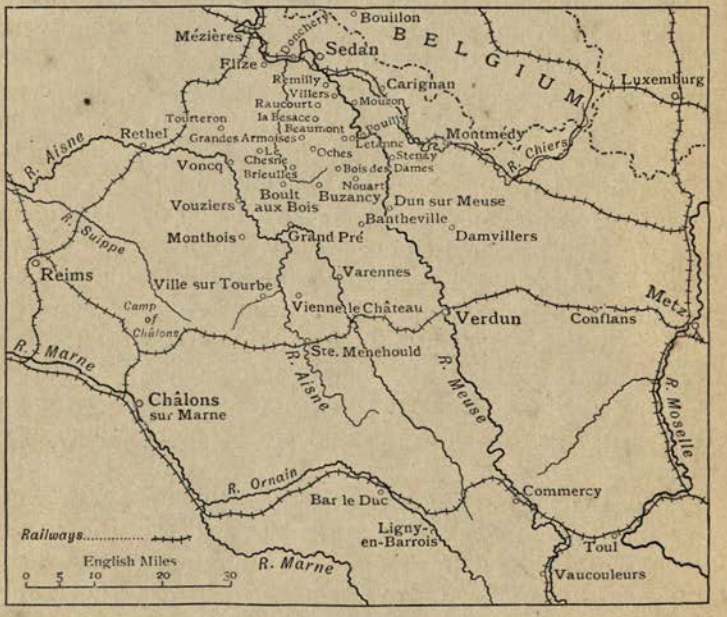
While Bazaine was falling into the trap which Moltke had prepared, the Emperor Napoleon had travelled from Gravelotte through Verdun to Châlons, where he arrived on August 16th. Thither had been directed the three corps of MacMahon, de Failly and Douay, of which the last was still in process of transport by railway from Belfort. A new corps, the XIIth, had been made up of a division of marines, the regular division which had at first been watching the Pyrenees, and a division of new troops. On the morning of August 17th, the Emperor, knowing nothing of the battle of the 16th, discussed the situation with MacMahon and other generals. He nominated General Trochu Governor of Paris; and Trochu at once left to take up this post. MacMahon was appointed Commander-in-chief of the army of Châlons, under Bazaine as generalissimo. It was decided that the army of Châlons should march towards Paris to cooperate in its defence and that the Emperor should

return to the capital. But this plan, communicated to the Government at Paris, met with determined opposition. The Empress, anxious, above all, to preserve the throne for her son, had lost faith in the Emperor and assured him that his appearance in Paris after defeat would mean a revolution. Palikao, ambitious and vain, had just been made the head of a new Ministry. MacMahon, in command of an army at or near Paris, would overshadow him; he had, therefore, better march to the help of Bazaine. This project would fulfil the immediate purposes of the Empress and of Palikao; it would gratify the politicians and the newspaper-writers, and so gain their support for the Regent and her Government, while keeping away the Emperor and MacMahon. But it would not serve the purpose of defeating the German armies or of helping Bazaine. The distance from Châlons to Montmédy is eighty miles—six or seven days' march. Two German armies were marching towards Châlons, between the Marne and the road through Verdun and Ste Menehould. The road to Montmédy by Grand Pré and Dun was only two days' march from the Verdun road, so that MacMahon's movement could hardly escape discovery by the Germans, who would then turn northwards to attack him. He would have his back to the Belgian frontier and in case of defeat would have no retreat. Palikao's idea that MacMahon might evade the German armies, whose cavalry was known to be scouring the country, was absurd. Montmédy was four days' march from Metz, and there was no certainty that Bazaine could make his way thither. MacMahon felt that the project was wrong; but he had not the strength of will to meet it with a flat refusal. He telegraphed to Bazaine for instructions; but Bazaine replied that, at so great a distance, he could not offer advice or suggestions and referred him to the Minister of War. Between Palikao's objections to a march towards Paris and his own repugnance to Palikao's

plan, MacMahon devised a half measure, which, at any rate, put off the decision. Hearing that Prussian troops were approaching Châlons—a report which was premature—he marched the army on August 21st to Reims. There, he was joined by Douay's corps brought round by railway, without having been detrained at Châlons. On the 22nd, he had prepared the orders for a march towards Paris when he received from Bazaine a telegram, dated the 18th, describing the battle of Gravelotte, but concealing his defeat and adding: 'I still count on taking the direction towards the north and then turning by Montmédy to the road from Ste Menehould to Châlons, if it is not strongly occupied. If it is so occupied, I shall go on to Sedan or even to Mézières, in order to reach Châlons.' MacMahon inferred that Bazaine would shortly be on the march towards Montmédy, and, holding that loyalty required him to help his comrade if possible, determined to move towards Montmédy. He set out from Reims on August 23rd.

It was clear that the chance of reaching Montmédy without having to fight the Prussian armies or having to deal with more than one of them depended upon the rapidity of the march. Two days had been lost by the *détour* through Reims, and more were destined to be wasted. The direction chosen was in the first place to the Aisne above Vouziers. The first day's march led to the Suippe. But here it was found that two of the corps had no provisions for next day. The direction was therefore changed and the left wing directed to Rethel, so that the army might be supplied with food by the railway. Two corps reached Rethel on the 24th, and halted there on the 25th, while the other two corps came up to the Aisne with the right-hand corps at Vouziers. Then, on the 26th, the righthand corps (VIIth) halted at Vouziers, while the other three made a right wheel, which brought the Vth corps to Le Chesne, the Ist behind it to the Aisne and the XIIth to

Tourteron. On the evening of the 26th, German cavalry patrols came into contact with troops of the righthand corps (Douay) near Vouziers. An advanced brigade at Grand Pré took alarm and stood to arms, sending word to General Douay, who deployed his corps in a defensive position, where he kept it all night under arms in the rain,



Metz to Sedan

and sent word to MacMahon that the enemy was approaching him. MacMahon determined boldly to attack this enemy and, on the 27th, made a right wheel for the purpose of directing the Vth corps towards Buzancy in line with the VIIth at Vouziers and bringing the other two behind them in support. But, during the morning, it was discovered that there was no enemy in the neighbourhood except a few

troops of cavalry. MacMahon, thereupon, countermanded the movement, to the disappointment of the troops, whose spirits had risen with the hope of a battle. That night found the VIIth corps still at Vouziers, the Vth at Brieulles-sur-Bar, the XIIth at Le Chesne and the Ist at Voncq on the Aisne. That same night of the 27th, MacMahon learned that Bazaine was still at Metz, contained by 200,000 Germans, and that the armies of the two Crown-princes had both wheeled northwards and were coming towards him. He wisely decided to retreat to Mézières, and issued his orders accordingly for the march of the 28th. But he foolishly telegraphed this decision to Palikao at Paris, who telegraphed in reply: 'If you abandon Bazaine, there will be a revolution in Paris.' The troops had already started towards Mézières on the 28th when MacMahon received Palikao's message. He once more subordinated his own good sense to Palikao's insistence, again made his army face about towards Montmédy, and set the several corps on the roads by Nouart and Beaumont towards Stenay. It was a fatal decision, and involved the doom of his army, which the retreat to Mézières might have saved.

On August 24th, Moltke at Bar-le-Duc learned that the camp at Châlons had been abandoned, and that the French army had marched to Reims, and was probably moving to the help of Bazaine. On the 25th, he ordered both armies to take the direction of Reims, rather than that of Châlons. As the day wore on, a telegram from London told him that Paris newspapers announced that MacMahon was marching to the relief of Bazaine. He grasped the situation at once and determined, if the reports of his cavalry, which was reconnoitring to the north-west and north, should confirm the statement of the telegram, to meet MacMahon with 150,000 men near Damvillers, to the south of Montmédy. He was resolved not to have his plans again upset by the

misunderstandings of the commanders of the armies; and for the next few days, in all doubtful or urgent cases, he sent his orders direct to the commanders of army corps, informing the army commanders of the orders thus sent. On the 25th he sent a staff-officer to explain his plan to the Crown-prince of Saxony, and, at noon on August 26th, sent orders to him to march in the new direction, to the two Bavarian corps to follow him, and to Prince Frederick Charles at Metz to send two army corps towards Damvillers, starting from Metz on the 27th. By the evening of August 26th, the XIIth corps had reached Varennes, and three German cavalry divisions had their patrolling squadrons stretched out on the line, forty-four miles long, from the camp at Châlons to Dun on the Meuse. All the corps of both armies had during the day turned their faces northward.

On the 27th, the cavalry divisions reached the line Stenay —Buzancy—Monthois, with patrols in front of them, and reported a strong French force at Vouziers, with cavalry at Beaumont and Buzancy. The XIIth Saxon corps had crossed the Meuse and was holding the bridges at Dun and Stenay. That evening, Moltke directed the Crown-prince of Saxony to move towards Beaumont and Buzancy and the two Bavarian corps towards Grand Pré. He was now sure of striking the French army west of the Meuse, and sent word to Prince Frederick Charles that the two corps, which had already started from before Metz, would not be required.

On the 28th, the foremost German army corps halted for the night on the line Dun—Bantheville—Varennes—Vienne-le-Château—Ville-sur-Tourbe. That evening, Moltke divined that two French corps were marching from Vouziers by Buzancy to Stenay and two others from Le Chesne towards Beaumont. He ordered the Crown-prince of Saxony to close up his army, and the two Bavarian corps to follow its left wing, with a view to an attack to be directed against the road Vouziers—Buzancy—Stenay, an

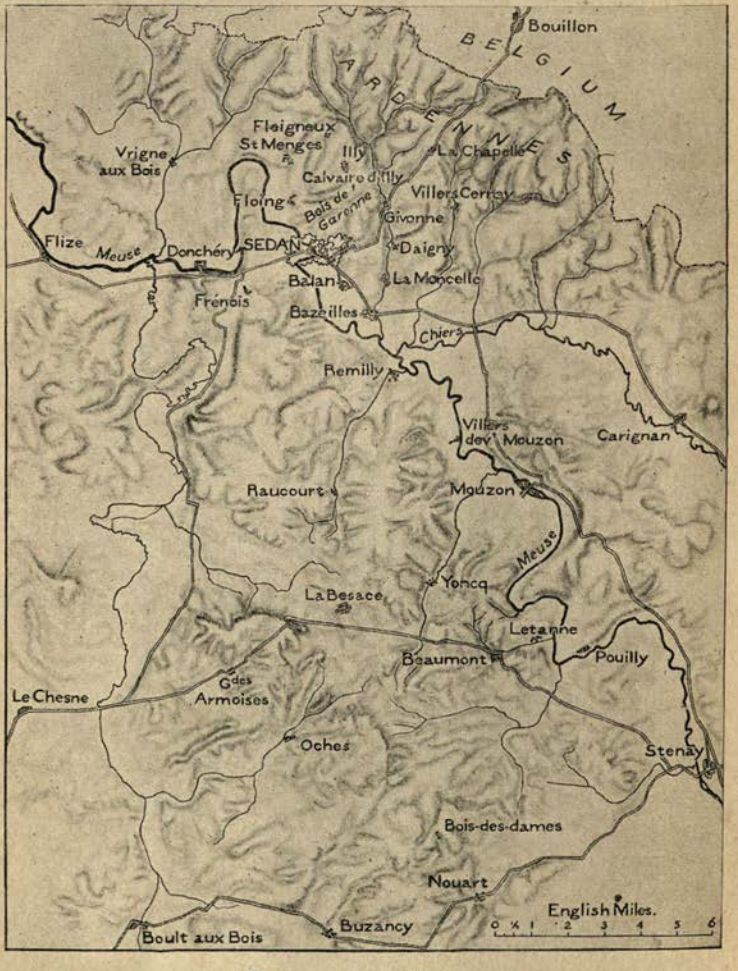
attack not to be delivered till the 30th, when the other troops of the Third army might also take part in it.

On the 28th, MacMahon's corps, after the start for Mézières and the counter-orders, made slow progress. On the northern road, the XIIth corps reached La Besace and the Ist corps Grandes Armoises. But, on the southern road, there were troubles with the waggon-trains and with scouting-parties of German cavalry; so that the Vth corps halted at Bois-des-Dames, about three miles north of Nouart, and the VIIth only reached Boult-aux-Bois. That night, MacMahon learned that Stenay was occupied by German troops and sent orders to de Failly (Vth) to change his direction, march through Beaumont and cross the Meuse at Mouzon. But the officer bearing the order was taken by the Germans, and the order disclosed its secrets to Moltke.

On the 29th, MacMahon's XIIth corps from La Besace crossed the Meuse at Mouzon, and the Ist reached Raucourt, six miles from Mouzon. De Failly set out from Bois-des-Dames for Stenay, but found German troops in position across his path at Nouart, and deployed his leading division to attack them. They were the advance-guard of the XIIth corps, which had orders not to attack on that day and drew back after a short engagement. But de Failly, expecting further attack, kept his troops in position till 5 p.m. when MacMahon repeated the order to march to Beaumont. Even then, de Failly kept his troops in their defensive position till dark and marched in the night to Beaumont, where the troops arrived so tired that next day he postponed his start for Mouzon till the afternoon. Douay, from Boult-aux-Bois, had also been turned towards Beaumont but halted for the night at Oches.

On the 29th Moltke had brought up both his armies within striking distance of the French; the Crown-prince of Saxony stood on the line Buzancy—Nouart, the Crown-prince

of Prussia on a parallel line, five or six miles further back and to the left, so that the two Bavarian corps of his right wing were in the rear of the Crown-prince of Saxony's left.



Beaumont and Sedan

At 11 p.m., Moltke issued his orders for the 30th. The enemy's forces, he said, seemed to be between Beaumont and Le Chesne or south of that line. They were to be attacked. The Crown-prince of Saxony was to advance through the country to the right of the Buzancy—Beaumont road. The Bavarian corps were to take that road, and the rest of the Third army the direction of Le Chesne. The Crown-prince of Saxony was not to pass the line five miles south of Beaumont till 10 a.m. The Third army was to set out as early in the morning as possible.

Thus, in the region about 20 miles broad between the Aisne and the Meuse, seven army corps, over 200,000 men, were to sweep northwards. MacMahon's 120,000 would have a poor chance against them. But the XIIth French corps was already across the Meuse, and the Ist at Raucourt was only five or six miles from the river and could not be reached that day by German troops. The blow fell on the Vth corps.

De Failly's troops were resting around the town of Beaumont without proper outposts, cooking, cleaning their arms, or merely waiting, when at about one o'clock shells began to burst among them. After a brief moment of confusion, they fell in and defended themselves. The Crown-prince of Saxony had assigned a separate route to each of his divisions, so as to shorten the time within which each corps could bring all its forces into action. Within a short time after the first shell, the four divisions of two army corps were assailing the French corps at Beaumont, and there soon followed the attack of two Bavarian divisions along the Buzancy—Beaumont road. 67,000 men with 276 guns were moving against 16,000 men with 84 guns. The ground offered some good positions; the deep valley of the Meuse on the one flank and woods on the other cramped the Germans in their efforts to deploy, and the French troops fell back, fighting bravely over the five miles from Beaumont to

Mouzon. They were helped by the artillery of their XIIth corps from the opposite bank of the Meuse. One division of Douay's VIIth corps, moving from La Besace towards Yoncq, was caught by the Bavarian troops as they came up, and driven north in confusion. General Lebrun sent troops of his XIIth corps back to Mouzon to cover de Failly's retreat; but, by evening, the last of de Failly's troops had been driven across the river. The Germans had lost 3500 men killed and wounded; the French 7500 killed, wounded, and prisoners.

During the day MacMahon's Ist corps had crossed the Meuse at Remilly and marched to Carignan. Of the VIIth corps part had crossed at Villers, and the greater part marched to Remilly, where in the evening it was still waiting till the Ist corps and the cavalry division which followed it should have cleared the bridge.

Though less than half of his troops had been engaged, the day of Beaumont had decided the fate of MacMahon's army. He perceived that it was impossible to continue the movement towards Montmédy or to help Bazaine, and that the problem was how to save his own troops. At eight in the evening, he gave orders for all the corps to march in the night to the heights of Sedan. Douay's corps moved thither by both banks of the river. The other three corps were between the Meuse and the Chiers, in the triangle formed by the two rivers below Mouzon and Carignan. The Vth corps, from Mouzon, was followed by the XIIth, while the last troops did not leave Mouzon till one in the morning. Half the Ist corps marched in the night; the other half did not leave Carignan till next morning.

Three hours after MacMahon's order, Moltke instructed two of his corps (XIIth and Guards) to cross the Meuse at Pouilly and Létanne and to close against the French army the routes leading eastwards between the Meuse and the Belgian frontier. The other five corps were to march north-

wards on the left bank of the Meuse, so as to deal with an attempt of the French to recross the Meuse or march westwards. The German troops moved in the morning of the 31st, the two corps sent across the Meuse following on the heels of the retiring French corps, and the others coming up during the day to the south bank of the Meuse to Villers, Remilly and Donchéry, with two corps in reserve and the Württemberg division at Flize.

MacMahon's idea was to give his army a day's rest at Sedan, for the purpose of replenishing its supplies of food and ammunition, and of recovering from the fatigue and confusion of the recent marches and the depression of the last engagements. He gave no orders on the 31st for a move next day, and the army indeed was hardly in condition to make one. The generals took up positions for defence where they stood.

The town of Sedan lies at the foot of a spur of the Ardennes, about five miles long, from Fleigneux in the north to Bazeilles in the south, and about three miles across from Floing to Givonne. The highest point of the spur in the wood of Garenne is about 475 feet above the Meuse. North of the wood, between it and the village of Illy, is the Calvaire d'Illy. Douay's corps was posted on a ridge stretching up from Floing to the Calvaire d'Illy. Along the crest looking down on the Givonne brook were posted Ducrot's corps, from the Calvaire d'Illy to Daigny, and Lebrun's, from Daigny to Bazeilles and Balan. De Failly's corps was in reserve between Sedan and the wood of Garenne. Both the north-western and eastern fronts were very strong positions for infantry. But every part of the position was commanded, at effective artillery range, by the hills opposite to it, and the town of Sedan and the slopes above it by the hills on the left bank of the Meuse. The bridges above and below the town had not been broken. The high road to Mézières follows the south bank of the Meuse, and was

in German hands. A road runs to Mézières from Floing through Vrigne-aux-Bois; but between these two places it passes along the river at the foot of a slope rising steeply to 130 feet above the stream. No troops defended this defile, for passing through which, if the army had had to retreat, its 120,000 men would have needed many hours and their *impedimenta* many more. The only other escape was through the woods to the Belgian frontier, seven or eight miles from Sedan. In the afternoon of August 31st, the Bavarian troops had seized the railway-bridge south of Bazeilles and had an engagement, which was broken off, with troops of the French XIIth corps, who were in that village. On the 31st, General Wimpffen, who had just returned from Algeria, reported himself to MacMahon with a letter from Palikao appointing him to command the Vth corps in the place of de Failly. He had also a letter appointing him to command the army in case of accident to MacMahon; but of this on the 31st he made no mention.

Very early on the morning of September 1st, the Bavarians from the south bank crossed by the railway-bridge and pontoon-bridges and attacked Bazeilles, assisted by Saxon batteries near La Moncelle. MacMahon rode to the slope that looks down on Bazeilles and Moncelle to watch the engagement, and at 6.15 was wounded in the thigh by a shell, which rendered him unconscious. He was carried away to the town, and word was sent to Ducrot, his best general, whom he had chosen to succeed him, that he must take the command. At 7 o'clock, Ducrot ordered the army to be collected on the plateau of Illy; for he meant to fight his way to Vrigne-aux-Bois and save as much of the army as he could. Lebrun, whose troops at Bazeilles had driven back the Bavarians, protested, but obeyed; and some of his brigades had been withdrawn and set in motion, when Wimpffen produced his letter from Palikao and claimed the

command. Ducrot bowed to the authority produced, but urged the necessity of the movement he had proposed. Wimpffen declared that there must be no retreat; that victory must be won at Bazeilles, and the way opened to Carignan. Ducrot returned to his army corps. Lebrun's troops fought desperately at Bazeilles; but the Bavarians were reinforced by the Saxons from Douzy, by the IVth corps and by their own IInd corps. By noon, the French were driven out of Bazeilles, and then, by degrees, from Balan; and, as the German reinforcements came up from the east, they were forced back to where the Bouillon road cuts across the plateau from Sedan to Daigny.

Meanwhile the Prussian XIth corps had marched from Donchéry round the bend of the Meuse, its advance-guard and its artillery had passed unopposed to St Menges and deployed between that place and Fleigneux. Douay defended his position; but the artillery of the XIth corps was reinforced by that of the Vth, and, in the afternoon, Douay had to resist both army corps and their formidable artillery. To the east, the Prussian Guard came up through La Chapelle and Villers-Cernay, and attacked Ducrot between Illy and Daigny. The right wing of the Guards joined hands with the left wing of the XIth corps at Fleigneux, so that the French army was completely surrounded. The French positions were subjected to the cross fire of long lines of guns from the hills to the east and north. No part of the ground was safe from the shells. The French artillery was overpowered and the wood of Garenne became untenable. Douay fought hard at Floing. When his infantry was too hard pressed, he appealed to the cavalry, and a series of amazing charges were delivered on the ground around Floing. The horsemen showed how they could die, for the Prussian shells and bullets swept them down. But their heroism was unavailing, and, by degrees, the French retreated from each front towards the town of Sedan.

The narrow space in which the whole French army was crowded was bombarded by 500 guns from the great circle of surrounding hills. At four in the afternoon, a white flag was hoisted on the citadel. The Emperor sent General Reille with a flag of truce to King William's headquarters, on the heights of Frénois overlooking the fortress, with a note announcing that he surrendered his sword. The King asked that a general might be sent to arrange the terms of a capitulation. This duty was imposed upon Wimpffen, who had claimed the command. Next morning 83,000 men became prisoners of war. During the battle, 17,000 had been killed or wounded and 21,000 made prisoners. Some 3000 had escaped into Belgium.

In the meantime, on August 23rd, Bazaine at Metz had received from MacMahon a note, rolled up like a cigarette, to say that the army of Châlons would march on Montmédy. He told no one. He wrote to MacMahon that he could break through the Prussian line, but at the same time sent word to Palikao that he could not. He gave orders for an attack on August 26th, which was to lead to Thionville. He spent half the day in moving the army to the right bank of the Moselle. He left his personal baggage at Metz, proving that he never meant to leave the fortress, and at noon, while the troops were kept standing in a storm of rain, he assembled his generals, and obtained from two of them the opinion that lack of ammunition made the projected escape impracticable and from the others their assent to this conclusion. The troops were then marched back. On August 30th, a messenger brought word that MacMahon had set out for Montmédy, and this news became known. Accordingly, a sortie was ordered for the 31st in the direction of Thionville, though several generals rightly urged that the better direction was to the south-east. On the 31st, the movements were so badly arranged that the morning was lost,

and two hours were spent in a useless conference with the generals, so that the attack was not delivered till four in the afternoon. It was preceded by an ineffectual cannonade, in which the reserve artillery was not employed, so that the German guns had the advantage. Yet the infantry carried Noisseville, Servigny and the other villages forming the Prussian defences. In the night, the Germans made counter-attacks; and, next morning, after ambiguous orders from Bazaine, which revealed that he had no real intention to break through, the troops lost faith in the enterprise. By noon, the Prussians, having had time to bring further troops from the left bank, had recovered their old positions. Bazaine made no further attempt to escape, and the few sorties, which he arranged by way of collecting provisions from the villages between the two armies, were ineffectual.

Moltke had now carried out the first part of his programme, the destruction of the French armies; for the army of Châlons had been captured at Sedan, and the army of the Rhine surrounded at Metz must share the same fate so soon as its provisions should be exhausted. It remained to occupy the capital; and, for this purpose, the Third and Fourth armies at once resumed the march from Sedan towards Paris, two army corps being left to deal with the French prisoners.

The news of the catastrophe of Sedan reached Paris on September 3rd. Next day, the debate in the Chamber was broken up by the forcible entrance of the crowd; and Léon Gambetta, a young advocate already looked upon as the radical leader, after proclaiming in the Chamber that Napoleon and his dynasty had for ever ceased to reign, carried off with him the leaders of the republican party to the Hôtel de Ville, where the deputies of Paris hastily constituted themselves into a Government of National Defence, anticipating the attempt of the socialist leaders to form a

Government of their own. The Empress-Regent made her escape to England. The task to be undertaken by the new Government was indicated by its title; but the men who formed it had been the opponents of the measures of military preparation proposed by Marshal Niel. They had been pacifists, and knew less of war and of its conduct than the generals upon whom Napoleon III had relied. Their ideas hardly went beyond the defence of Paris, which had been fortified, at the instance of Thiers, in 1840; and they did not grasp the truth that the only way to defend France was to defeat the German armies in the field. Accordingly, the members of the Government determined to remain in Paris, delegating three of their number to undertake the administration of the rest of (unoccupied) France from Tours. One of these was Jules Favre, appointed Minister for Foreign Affairs; but most of the foreign diplomats betook themselves to Tours, where a French diplomatic delegacy was formed. Gambetta protested against the arrangement, holding that the Government should concentrate its energy on organising the resistance of France and should not let itself be shut up in the capital.

The head of the new Government at Paris was General Trochu, an officer popular because he was a fluent speaker and had severely criticised the organisation of the army in the period before the war. He was neither a profound strategist nor a strong character. He had no idea of governing Paris with a firm hand such as is required with a besieged city, and was much more disposed to conciliate than to keep down the crowd. His colleagues in the Government were not likely to strengthen his military judgment; but there were two good soldiers in Paris on whom for the most part Trochu wisely relied. Ducrot had urged on MacMahon the necessity for promptly fighting his way from Sedan to Mézières, and, after the catastrophe, when a prisoner, had made his escape from Pont-à-Mousson.

Vinoy had gallantly conducted the retreat of the XIIIth corps from Mézières to Paris.

On September 18th, when the German armies were near at hand, Jules Favre, Minister of Foreign Affairs, went out with the concurrence of his colleagues to confer with Bismarck at Ferrières. Favre asked for an armistice, in order that a National Assembly might be convened. Bismarck demanded as a condition the surrender of Toul, Bitche and Strassburg, and of Mont Valérien, the most important of the detached forts of Paris, while the *status quo* in and around Paris should continue, and hostilities should proceed around Metz. Alsace-Lorraine was not to be allowed to send deputies to a National Assembly. But Favre had publicly announced that France would not cede an inch of her territory or a stone of her fortresses. The armistice was declined, and Favre returned to Paris to remove from the minds of his colleagues the illusions which he had shared with them. On the next day, the German armies moved forward to surround Paris, that of the Crown-prince of Saxony on the north, that of the Crown-prince of Prussia on the south. The detached forts with which Paris was surrounded had been built before the age of rifled guns, and were therefore too near to the city to prevent a bombardment of the *enceinte*. Some of those on the south side were commanded from the neighbouring heights of Châtillon[1]. A proposal made early in September, to employ the national guards in the erection of earthworks to protect these heights had been rejected; but Ducrot thought it desirable to retain them and moved out with the XIVth corps to defend the plateau of Châtillon. Some of his battalions, however, proved too raw for the occasion, and he was obliged to leave the Germans in possession of the plateau.

At this time, Moltke expected Paris to hold out for not more than a month or six weeks, after which he thought

[1] See sketch, p. 518.

the French would accept the Prussian terms and the war be ended. On September 22nd, he wrote to his brother Adolf that he hoped to be shooting hares on his estate at Creisau in Silesia at the end of October[1]. It seemed to the eye of a professional soldier a reasonable estimate of the prospect; for there was no French army left. Bazaine could not escape from Metz, round which the First and Second armies had entrenched themselves, while the Third and Fourth armies were fortifying their lines round Paris. The only resistance anticipated was that of the fortresses near the frontier, which prevented the use of the railways for supplying the army at Paris. Sedan and one or two insignificant places had indeed been taken; but the *coups de main* attempted against Bitche, Phalsbourg, Toul, Verdun and Thionville had failed. Now that there was no longer a question of a French landing on the German coast, the five divisions left at home to resist it were brought from Germany to besiege the fortresses. An army in the field could, no doubt, upset the German plan, for it could attack either the armies investing Metz or those surrounding Paris, or could act against the lines of communication by which the armies were supplied. That would have been the proper function of MacMahon's army, which, however, had been thrown away to no purpose.

This view, which seems to have been Moltke's, left out of account the patriotism of the French people and too lightly assumed that nothing could be accomplished with improvised armies. Indeed, the Prussian policy was by terror to prevent the people from taking part in the defence of their country. It will be remembered that, in July, the French Government had authorised the enrolment of *francs-tireurs* and prescribed their uniform and organisation. On August 22nd, Moltke issued a circular to the commanders of the German armies, in which, after calling attention to the volunteer corps called *francstireurs* and describing their

[1] Moltke, *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. IV, p. 198.

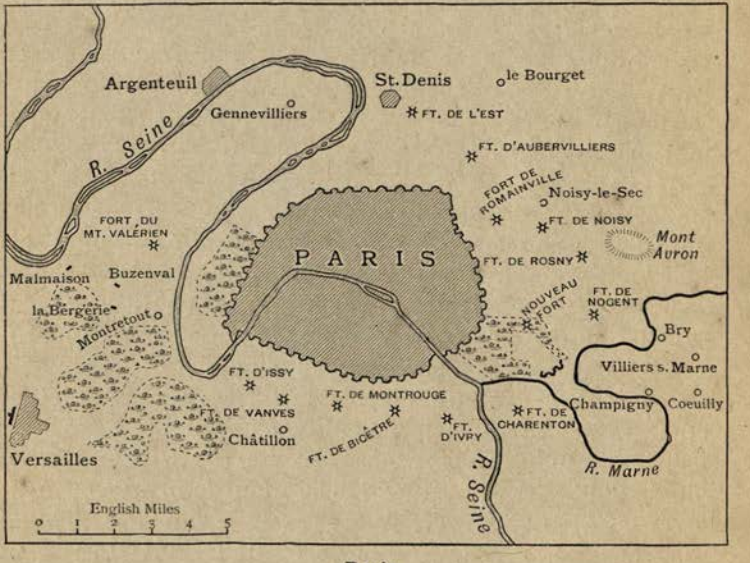
uniforms, he said: 'as they are not soldiers, they fall under martial law and the death penalty.' From that time on, no quarter was given to *francstireurs*, and villages in which they were found were ruthlessly burned. Yet, until the end of the war, the *francstireurs* proved a very serious embarrassment to the reconnoitring activity of the German cavalry and, in many cases, presented to it an impassable barrier.

The defence of Paris proved much more determined than was expected by the German leaders, to whose surprise the French raised a number of new armies that took the field. Thus, the history of the war from the end of September is not merely that of the investment of Metz and Paris and of the siege of fortresses, but also of a series of campaigns in three theatres of war. Unfortunately for France, none of the fortresses except Metz was designed to resist attack by rifled guns; and Metz was not provisioned for an army in addition to its garrison. The defence of the fortresses was therefore not sufficiently prolonged to be of much avail; they fell, one after another, before there had been time to give the new armies a sufficient training, and the surrender of each of them in turn set the German troops engaged in the siege free for action against the French armies in the field.

The German army which invested Paris was at the outset about 150,000 strong. The number of armed men who were at this time inside Paris was far greater. There were some 90,000 regulars, made up of the XIIIth corps, brought back from Mézières, and the XIVth corps, composed of a number of fourth battalions, besides some 14,000 marines and a number of fourth battalions not yet grouped into an army corps. There were also 115,000 'mobile' national guards, of whom those of the Seine, about a quarter of the number, were insubordinate and useless, though the remainder, who had been brought in from the provinces, were of a more promising type. The national guard of

Paris itself gradually increased, till it numbered—on paper—209,000 men.

Ducrot perfectly understood the difficulties of any attempt to break through the investing lines. The Germans would quickly fortify their positions, which would every week become more formidable. Upon these a frontal attack would be necessary, and both flanks of the assailants would be exposed. It would be impossible to move out



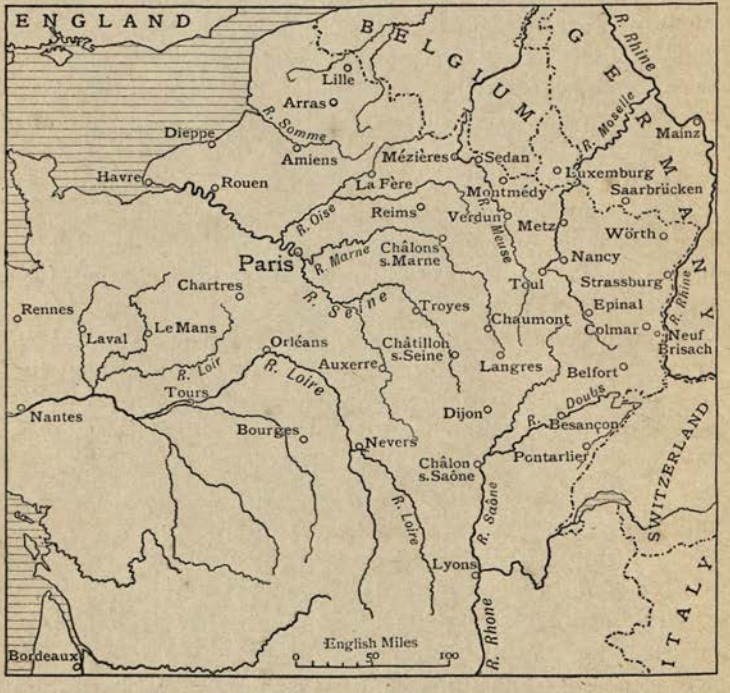
Paris

from the city by surprise a body of troops large enough to have a chance of success; and the Germans would, therefore, be able to reinforce their defences at any point attacked. Ducrot carefully matured his plan. He saw that three conditions were indispensable. The point of attack must be the most favourable both for the actual assault and for the subsequent escape, in case of success. The force

employed to attempt the attack must be well organised and disciplined, and, above all, it must be able to count on the assistance of an army from outside. The most promising direction in which to attempt a great sortie was through Argenteuil, in the direction of Pontoise. In this neighbourhood it would be easiest to cross the Seine; and this was the quarter towards which it would probably be the most difficult for the Germans to move their reinforcements. The line of investment once broken, the escaping army would quickly be able to cross the Oise, which would then protect its rear, while the Seine would protect its flank. From Pontoise, it could cooperate with a relieving army starting from Rouen, where all the provincial forces could be assembled by railways out of reach of the German army.

This plan being accepted by Trochu, Ducrot proposed that its execution should be entrusted to Vinoy, and that he himself should go to Tours to raise and take charge of the relieving army. But Trochu was unwilling to dispense with Ducrot for the conduct of the sortie, and would not consent to his leaving Paris. Instead, it was decided that Gambetta, the most vigorous member of the Government, should take charge of the national defence in the provinces; and, accordingly, on October 8th Gambetta left Paris by balloon. During the weeks that followed, Ducrot pushed on his preparations. A number of sorties were made with a view to hardening the troops and disturbing the Germans. That of October 21st towards Malmaison enabled Ducrot to strengthen his hold on the peninsula of Gennevilliers, which his troops must eventually cross to reach Argenteuil. He posted artillery in positions to prepare his attack and to protect his flanks. On November 8th, he undertook to reorganise the forces in Paris, so as to form three armies: the first, of national guards, to protect the ramparts and to keep order; the second, under his own command, 100,000 men, most of them regulars, with 300 guns, to undertake

the sortie; the third, under Vinoy, of provincial mobile guards with a stiffening of regulars, to assist in this operation, and to defend Paris after Ducrot's army should have left. But no tidings came to Paris of the military intentions of the provincial government, until, on the 14th of November, a dispatch was received from Gambetta announcing the victory of Coulmiers.



The Theatre of War

When the German armies surrounded Paris, the rest of France was without an army and without a Government. The investment of Paris, though it did not altogether sever the communications between the Government and the pro-

vinces, rendered it difficult to preserve the requisite harmony of action between the provincial and the Parisian forces. All men of military age were indeed called to arms, and troops began to be raised and organised at the headquarters of the four provincial commands—Lille, Le Mans, Bourges and Besançon; but there was need of a central direction and a coordinating impulse stronger than could be given by the three delegates who had been sent by the Government of National Defence to Tours. Scattered over the country, there were a number of fourth battalions and depot companies, which had been left behind when the regular troops were sent to the front. There were also the mobile national guards, except those which, with many fourth battalions, had been sent to Paris. There were the raw conscripts belonging to the class 1870, and there were a number of old soldiers who had been recalled to the colours. Four regular regiments which had been left in Algeria were recalled by the delegates at Tours, under whose instructions General Lefort, Deputy Minister of War, was organising a XVth army corps. Fourteen thousand men were assembling on the Lower Seine, others at Chartres and Vernon; while in the district of Besançon, General Cambriels was forming an army corps, with a view to holding the passages of the Vosges. There were a large number of rifles and guns in the various arsenals, of which the chief was at Bourges, though the greater part of the material of war was concentrated at Paris. The great difficulty in the way of forming and organising new troops was the lack of officers; for the greater part of the regular officers were now either besieged in Metz or prisoners in Germany, and the few that remained were those who had retired or had been left behind at the depots—evidently not the best of the whole.

Thus, in the provinces no formidable resistance could in the first instance be offered to the Germans, whose

immediate object was to obtain possession of a through railway from German territory to Paris; and for this purpose they pressed the sieges of Toul and Strassburg. Five days after the battle of Wörth, the Baden division began the investment of Strassburg; and it was reinforced soon afterwards by two other divisions from Germany. The works protecting Strassburg were quite out of date; there were no detached forts and the artillery was poor. General Ducrot, when governor of the place before the war, had declared that it could not hold out for a week. On August 21st, General von Werder, who had charge of the siege, began a bombardment, in order to hasten the capitulation by terror. But terror produced no further effect, and, a week later, he began a regular siege. The French artillery was easily silenced. A month later, the chief engineer of the defence reported to the commandant, General Uhrich, that a practicable breach had been made and that an assault might be expected. The white flag was hoisted on the cathedral spire, and on September 20th the defenders marched out with the honours of war. Toul, which was imperfectly fortified, had capitulated on September 23rd to a division brought from Germany to besiege it; and thus, after the surrender of Strassburg, the Germans had a through line of railway from Germany to the neighbourhood of Paris.

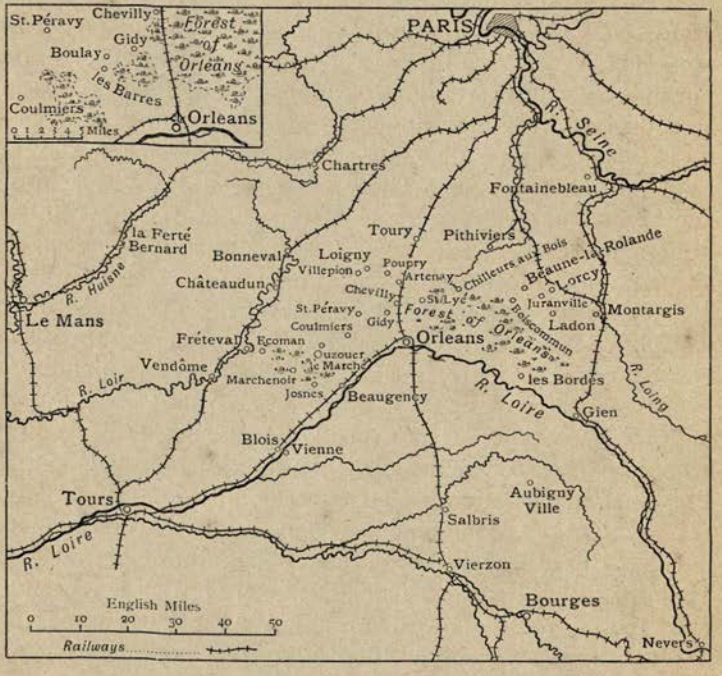
The fall of Strassburg set at liberty the considerable German forces which had carried on the siege. One of Werder's divisions remained to garrison Strassburg, another was at once sent on by railway to Paris. The Baden division, with an infantry and a cavalry brigade, was formed into a XIVth army corps, with which early in October Werder set out through the Vosges towards Épinal. He was resisted by a portion of the troops which had been raised by General Cambriels in the district of which the fortress of Besançon was the military centre. The raw

French troops could not stand against Werder's disciplined force; and, after a portion of his troops had been defeated at La Bourgonce, on October 6th, and at Bruyères, on October 11th, Cambriels fell back to Besançon, followed by Werder to the river Ognon. Werder then collected his troops at Vesoul and pushed a strong party towards Dijon. Here there were French forces consisting partly of volunteers gathered round Garibaldi, whose republican sympathies had induced him to fight for the French cause, partly of new troops under the command of the young and energetic General Crémer. After an engagement before Dijon on October 30th Garibaldi retired towards Autun, Crémer towards Beaune, and Werder's troops occupied Dijon.

Early in October, the new French XVth corps, under the command of General de la Motterouge, together with a cavalry division under General Reyau, moved from Orleans towards Paris; and its advanced guard drove back the German reconnoitring cavalry. By this time, the two German army corps left at Sedan to guard the prisoners had reached Paris; and Moltke, having now troops to spare from the investment, sent General von der Tann, with a Bavarian corps, the 22nd division, and two divisions of cavalry, to meet this force. In an encounter at Artenay, on October 10th, Reyau's cavalry was easily pushed back; and the French infantry, hastily organised, poorly equipped and badly officered, was confronted by a great mass of artillery and a body of veteran infantry. It was enveloped on either flank by a division of cavalry, and fell back in disorder. Next day von der Tann followed the retreating French and drove them out of Orleans, where he remained with his Bavarian corps, sending on General Wittich with the 22nd division to Chartres. Wittich, on his way to Chartres, was bravely resisted at Châteaudun by a handful of *francstireurs* and national guards, who had set up barricades and loop-

holed the houses. They fought well till nightfall, and, after their retreat, Wittich, in revenge, set fire to the town.

Thus, two of the new French armies had been brushed aside with little difficulty. But, on the 9th of October, Gambetta arrived at Tours and took over the authority



Orleans—Le Mans

which had hitherto been exercised by the delegates previously appointed by the Paris Government. Gambetta was the embodied spirit of national defence; there were no bounds to his energy, courage and faith in France. His eloquence breathed new hope into the people and stirred them to action. He assumed the powers of a dictator, and

his influence worked miracles. The scattered fourth battalions and depot companies, the mobile guards, the new conscripts, the volunteers who offered themselves, the reservists and the old soldiers, began to be fused into a comprehensive organisation. New batteries were put into the field at the rate of eleven a week and, since they were armed with percussion fuses, proved more effective than those which had fought in the great battles of Alsace and Lorraine. New *chassepots* were manufactured at the rate of a thousand a day; cartridges were turned out from every factory that could make them and were imported from England. Eleven new army corps were created, one after another. But officers were few, for the bulk of the professional officers were with the imprisoned or beleaguered armies, and officers cannot be improvised. Yet without competent officers troops can neither be well trained nor disciplined; above all, it was found impossible to supply the new army corps with staff officers worthy of the name.

Gambetta required an assistant in the direction of military operations and for this purpose chose de Freycinet, a civil engineer of great ability, intelligence and industry. Freycinet had no practical knowledge of armies or of war, yet he thought himself a general and acted as a commander-in-chief, directing armies by telegrams from his office at Tours or Bordeaux, and ever ready to overrule or interfere with the generals on the spot. He knew nothing of the mechanism of the march and the bivouac, and thought he could move army corps like the pieces on a chess board.

The great end which Gambetta set before himself was the relief of Paris; yet he seems, when he left the capital, not to have been fully initiated into the plans of Ducrot, or not to have grasped their importance. They were conveyed to him a few days later by M. Ranc, who left Paris on the 14th of October, and were confirmed by repeated dispatches from Trochu and Favre requesting him

to direct his forces, when organised, to Rouen, for the assistance of the great sortie from Paris.

The situation with which Gambetta had immediately to deal was the retreat of the XVth corps into the region of Orleans. He at once appointed General d'Aurelle de Paladines, a retired officer, to command it, and, on November 2nd, General Chanzy, who had recently returned from Algiers, where he had served with genuine distinction, to command another new corps, the XVIth. General d'Aurelle established the XVth corps in a defensive position near Salbris and, by good discipline and instruction, turned it in an incredibly short time into an effective fighting force. On October 24th and 25th, conferences were held between Freycinet and d'Aurelle at Salbris and at Tours for considering a plan of campaign for the XVth and XVIth corps which were now to form the army of the Loire under the supreme command of d'Aurelle. At these conferences, Freycinet never mentioned Ducrot's plan for a sortie from Paris towards the west and for the advance of a relieving army from Rouen; and d'Aurelle never heard of this project. The scheme adopted was one for the recovery of Orleans and for the establishment of the army of the Loire in an entrenched camp on the north bank of the Loire at that city. The XVIth and two divisions of the XVth corps were, first, to establish themselves between the forest of Marchenoir and the Loire, while one division of the XVth was to move down the right bank of that river from Gien. From these positions, they were to make a concentric attack on Orleans, and it was proposed in this way to annihilate von der Tann's force. It was a bad plan; for von der Tann might avoid being surrounded by moving out to meet one of the two advancing forces, and the idea of putting the army into an entrenched camp at Orleans hardly met the requirements of the general situation, and its all-important element, the relief of Paris, which was

not expected to hold out for more than a few weeks longer.

Before anything had been done, the news came of the surrender of Metz. Bazaine's army, since August 18th, had kept a German army of 200,000 men employed in blockading it, and his duty was to postpone to the uttermost the inevitable day of starvation and consequent surrender. But, instead of devoting himself to this end, and thereby co-operating in the defence of France, he ignored the Government of National Defence and entered into secret negotiations with the enemy, with the view of preserving his army until the peace, which he expected to follow from an early surrender of Paris, and after which he hoped, as Commander-in-chief of the only remaining army, to have a decisive voice in the affairs of France. As will be related below, the negotiations broke down; and, by the middle of October, the prospect of starvation obliged Bazaine to treat for a capitulation, which was signed on the 27th, and by which the fortress of Metz was surrendered and 173,000 officers and men of the army of the Rhine became prisoners of war.

Gambetta without hesitation denounced Bazaine as a traitor; and, in 1873, the Marshal was tried by a commission under the presidency of the Duc d'Aumale and sentenced to death[1]. There has been much discussion of his action between August 12th and August 18th. It is commonly held that he ought to have marched to Verdun not later than the 14th, and that it was a blunder to allow the army to be surrounded at Metz. But it may be doubted whether any other course than remaining at Metz would for so long have absorbed the energies of 200,000 German troops. At any rate, his surrender was disastrous for France, since it

[1] The penalty was commuted by President MacMahon to imprisonment for twenty years in the Ile Ste Marguerite near Cannes; but, in 1874, Bazaine escaped from the island and made his way to Madrid, where he died in 1888.

allowed this large force of veterans to march against the new French armies which Gambetta was raising, necessarily far from their equals in training and discipline. On November 2nd, Prince Frederick Charles, by Moltke's direction, set out with three army corps (the IIIrd, IXth and Xth) towards Bourges, Nevers and Châlon-sur-Saône; and, on November 7th, Manteuffel, leaving the VIIth corps at Metz to deal with the prisoners and to besiege Thionville, marched, with the Ist and VIIIth corps, towards the Aisne and the Oise. This completely changed the situation with which Gambetta had to deal.

At Paris, on the 28th of October, the general in charge of a portion of the north-eastern defences ordered an attack by his *francstireurs* on a Prussian company holding the village of Le Bourget. The attack succeeded, and the *francstireurs* were reinforced; but Trochu attached no importance to Le Bourget and declined to send guns to the general's assistance. The Prussians prepared a counter-attack and, on the 30th, pushed forward, with very superior forces, in order to drive the French out of the village. The French troops made a heroic resistance, but were finally overpowered. On October 31st, this defeat became known to the population of Paris at the same time as the capitulation of Metz and the arrival in Paris, from Tours, of Thiers, who had travelled round Europe in the vain hope of inducing one or other of the Powers to take action in behalf of France, and was now, with the approval of the Tours delegates, prepared to negotiate an armistice at Versailles, as a step towards peace. But, on the day before that on which he and Bismarck met (November 1st) an insurrection improvised by the Communists had broken out in Paris, and, for a time, the members of the Government were in danger. Jules Ferry, with the assistance of an officer of the mobiles and his soldiery, was able to release his colleagues; and, on November

3rd, the members of the Government invited, and on the 5th obtained, a popular vote of confidence requesting them to remain at their posts. The rising in Paris had been, after a fashion, successful; it encouraged Bismarck (or the headquarters, on whom he chose to throw the responsibility) to refuse an armistice unless the German troops were put in possession of one or more of the forts of Paris. Ducrot urged that Paris should continue her defence to gain time for the country to raise new armies. 'The resistance of Paris,' he said, 'will redeem the shame of Metz and Sedan.' 'You speak as a soldier,' said Thiers, 'and not as a statesman.' 'I speak as a statesman,' replied Ducrot. 'A great nation like France always recovers from its material ruin, but it can never recover from moral ruin. This generation will suffer, but the next will benefit by the honour which we shall have saved.' The Paris Government having refused Bismarck's final proposal of a short armistice without revictualling and declined to hold elections for a National Assembly without an armistice, the entire negotiations came to an end on November 6th, and Ducrot resumed his preparations for the great sortie towards Pontoise.

When it is remembered that the troops in the provinces were mainly composed of men who had not yet worn uniform for two months, and that the bulk of the officers had had no more training than their men, it becomes easy to understand that d'Aurelle was anxious to defer as long as possible the task of leading his army against the disciplined and hardened troops of the enemy. But Gambetta and Freycinet, misinformed by Trochu as to the length of time for which Paris had supplies of food, believed it urgent to act for the relief of the capital. Moreover, the German armies, set free by the surrender of Bazaine, were marching westward. The report of a possible armistice caused Gambetta to wait for a few days; but, so soon as it was known that there was to be no armistice, d'Aurelle was urged forward, and,

on the 8th, the army of the Loire moved out from the forest of Marchenoir and from Gien towards Orleans. Von der Tann, hearing of the advance, led his army corps westward, to Coulmiers, where, on the 9th, he received the French attack. He had 15,000 men against some 60,000; and, as the French troops, considering the disadvantages under which they laboured, behaved remarkably well, and drove back the Bavarian force at all points, von der Tann retreated in good time towards the Paris road, and made his way northwards long before the detachment from Gien could reach Orleans. He immediately sent for the 22nd division from Chartres, which rejoined him to the south of Paris. D'Aurelle failed to follow up his advantage, though he reoccupied Orleans; and Freycinet proposed to reinforce him by three further army corps.

The battle of Coulmiers had an immediate effect on the plans of both sides. Moltke ordered Prince Frederick Charles to abandon his movement towards the south-west, and to march as quickly as he could to the region between Paris and Orleans. On November 10th, when they had reached the line Troyes—Chaumont, the three corps of Prince Frederick Charles took the new direction. Gambetta sent word of the victory to Paris and soon afterwards informed Trochu that the army of the Loire would reach the forest of Fontainebleau at the beginning of December. As soon as this news became known in Paris, the civil members of the Government, ill-instructed but vehement in the assertion of their ideas, urged that the great sortie should be directed towards Fontainebleau; and, on the 20th of November, Trochu, under pressure of his colleagues, ordered Ducrot to prepare a fresh plan for a sortie in this new direction. It was a dangerous change, for, if Ducrot should manage to make his way out of Paris, he must expect to meet the army of Prince Frederick Charles, which, in any case, would be likely to interfere with the march of the army

of the Loire from Orleans towards Fontainebleau. The approach of Prince Frederick Charles was in reality an additional reason, not only for hastening the action of the French forces, but for keeping to the direction originally contemplated—Pontoise and Rouen.

Ducrot again made a careful plan. He would collect the bulk of his army, so that it could cross to the peninsula of Champigny and thence attack the German positions at Villiers-sur-Marne and Coeuilly, while a portion of his force from Neuilly-sur-Marne was to take the enemy in flank at Noisy-le-Sec and Bry. Trochu sent word to Gambetta that the sortie would be attempted on November 29th; but the message was delayed for some days, as the balloon carrying it alighted in Norway. D'Aurelle had allowed a fortnight to pass after Coulmiers. The German headquarters, puzzled by his inaction, thought he must have moved to the east. On November 13th the Grand-duke of Mecklenburg-Schwerin, with von der Tann's troops, reinforced to a strength of two army corps, was ordered towards Dreux, and thence towards Le Mans; and, on the 17th, the leading army corps of Prince Frederick Charles reached the Paris—Orleans road. The Grand-duke of Mecklenburg found no formidable enemy on the road from Dreux towards Le Mans, and, on November 23rd, when he had reached La Ferté Bernard, was ordered to rejoin Prince Frederick Charles by Châteaudun and Bonneval. D'Aurelle, in view of the imperfection of his new army corps, wished to remain on the defensive, in the entrenched camp near Orleans. But defence at Orleans would not relieve Paris. In vain, Freycinet urged him to plan an advance. D'Aurelle had placed the three divisions of the XVIth corps at St Peravy, Coulmiers and Les Barres; those of the XVth at Boulay, Gidy, Chevilly and St Lye. Gambetta and Freycinet reinforced his left by the XVIIth corps in the forest of Marchenoir and his right by the XVIIIth and XXth corps at Gien

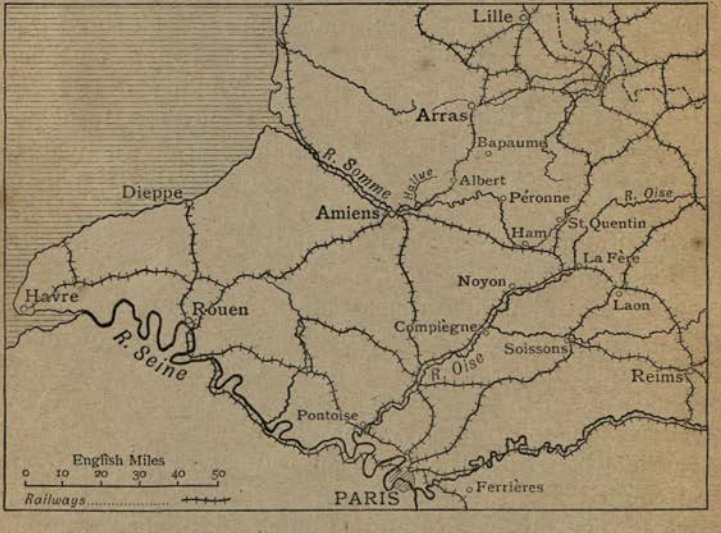
and Les Bordes. The five corps together had a total strength of 170,000 men, but, except the XVth and XVIth corps which had fought at Coulmiers, they were mere recruits with inexperienced officers.

On November 21st Freycinet, losing patience with d'Aurelle, began, with Gambetta's support, to direct the several army corps himself. He sent the XVIIth corps to Châteaudun and Bonneval on the Loir, whence its commander on the approach of the Grand-duke of Mecklenburg wisely withdrew it by a night march to Ecoman and later to Ouzouer-le-Marché, Marchenoir and Josnes. Freycinet then moved the XVIIIth corps to Ladon and the XXth to Boiscommun, leaving between the XXth and the XVth an interval of 15 miles which he filled by moving a division of the XVth to Chilleurs aux Bois. Thus on November 27th the army was spread out on a curve 60 miles long from Marchenoir by Chevilly to Ladon. On this day the Grand-duke of Mecklenburg was at Châteaudun and Bonneval; Prince Frederick Charles had the IXth corps at Toury, the IIIrd between that place and Pithiviers and the Xth at Beaune-la-Rolande. Freycinet ordered the XVIIIth and XXth corps to advance by way of beginning the movement on Fontainebleau. This brought on the battle of Beaune-la-Rolande on November 28th. The Xth corps was only 15,000 strong. Its left was posted behind Juranville and Lorcy, its right at Beaune-la-Rolande, a village of which the stone wall made it a small fortress. Billot, with the XVIIIth corps, attacked and pushed back the Prussian left; but it took time to drive the defenders out of one village after another, and the winter day was short. Crouzat, with the XXth corps, attacked Beaune-la-Rolande in front and on both flanks. But his repeated assaults on the well-defended village were repulsed; and, towards evening, as a last charge was preparing, his left, which had almost surrounded the place, was attacked in rear by a

division of cavalry and a division of infantry, sent from Pithiviers by the IIIrd German corps. Crouzat had to retire. The troops of both French corps had fought bravely, but were exhausted, and their supplies miscarried. Next day, their commanders found it impossible to renew the attack; and Billot's corps also fell back.

Freycinet now neglected the right wing and ordered Chanzy, who was thirty miles away to the left, to make for Pithiviers. Chanzy, with his corps, moved forward on December 1st and drove the German troops out of the village of Villepion. Next day, he deployed his corps to attack Loigny and the neighbouring villages. But, meanwhile, the Grand-duke of Mecklenburg, marching from Châteaudun to join Prince Frederick Charles, had the Bavarian corps behind Loigny to block Chanzy's path, and the 17th and 22nd divisions, equivalent to another army corps, within reach on his left rear. Chanzy attacked with great vigour, but was enveloped on both flanks and driven back; and the XVIIth corps, which had been ordered up to support him, could not reach him in time, except with a division which shared in his repulse. Two divisions of the XVth corps came up through Artenay towards Poupry, but were there checked by the 22nd division, which formed the Grand-duke's left wing. On December 3rd Prince Frederick Charles sent forward the IIIrd and Xth corps through Chilleurs aux Bois, now undefended, towards Orleans while the Grand-duke supported by the IXth corps moved towards Orleans by the roads from Paris and from Loigny. There was nothing to oppose them but the scattered divisions of the XVth corps, which were driven in; while Chanzy with the XVIth and XVIIth corps fell back towards Coulmiers, and the XVIIIth and XXth remained where they were, for Freycinet sent them no orders but instructed d'Aurelle to take charge of them again, an instruction which reached him too late. On the 4th Prince Charles

and the Grand-duke pressed on to the outskirts of Orleans, now defended only by fragments of the XVth corps, whose commander, after heavy but hopeless fighting in the suburbs, evacuated the town in the night. The French left wing retreated towards Marchenoir and Beaugency; the shattered centre and right wing crossed the Loire at and above Orleans and retreated southwards.



Amiens, Bapaume, St Quentin

Gambetta's great attempt to relieve Paris with the army of the Loire had ended in defeat. The simultaneous effort made in the north for the same purpose also failed. Gambetta had appointed a delegate for the region of which Lille was the military centre. Troops were raised there with *cadres* composed in part of officers who had escaped from Metz and Sedan. In October Bourbaki was appointed to the northern command, but resigned it when he found himself mistrusted in consequence of his former association

with the Emperor Napoleon and his visit to the Empress in England. He was succeeded in November by General Farre, who marched with 17,000 men to Amiens and was there joined by its garrison of 7000. With these troops he took up a position to the south and south-east of Amiens. Manteuffel with the Ist and VIIIth corps from Metz had marched to the Oise at Noyon by November 20th and from thence moved against Farre, whom he attacked on November 27th with 30,000 men. The French troops fought well; but their position was too extensive for the force which attempted to hold it, and Farre was compelled to retreat to Arras. Manteuffel then marched to Rouen, whence the Mobile Guard retired on his approach; and he followed them towards Havre and Dieppe.

The great sortie from Paris had no better fate. The attack on the investing line at Villiers and Coeuilly, planned by Ducrot for November 29th, had to be postponed to the 30th, owing to an accidental hindrance to the bridging of the Seine. This gave the Germans time to bring up reinforcements to the threatened point. In the attack, delivered on November 30th, Ducrot's troops fought with great bravery; but the commander of one of the corps was behind time, so that the flank attack, intended to be decisive, was not attempted until after that on the front, which, though it made some progress and the French troops held the positions they had won, failed to gain any decisive points of the German defences. On the next day, a cessation of arms followed; and, on December 2nd, the Germans, by this time reinforced, attacked the French at Bry and at Champigny. After three attacks in succession had been defeated, the Germans abandoned their attempts; but, on the afternoon of the 3rd, Ducrot, perceiving that he would not be able to force the enemy's lines, withdrew his troops behind the defences of Paris.

In the east Werder invested Belfort on November 3rd

and on November 12th attempted a *coup de main*, which failed, against the fortress of Auxonne. On November 26th and 27th he defeated an attempt made by Garibaldi against Dijon and drove him back to Autun. But Werder's counterstroke against Autun on December 1st was repulsed, and the detachment which made it was fortunate in frustrating the attempt, cleverly planned by Crémer, from Nuits, to intercept its return.

Thus, by the beginning of December, the German armies from Metz had beaten off the French levies, which had tried, from Orleans and from Lille, to raise the siege of Paris; the Parisian forces had proved unable to break through the investing lines; and Werder still dominated the region south of Alsace and Lorraine.

Gambetta's determination was not shaken by the failure of his enterprises at Amiens and Orleans and of the attempted sortie from Paris. After the loss of Orleans, he removed General d'Aurelle from the command of the army of the Loire. The centre and right wing, the XVth, XVIIIth and XXth corps which had retired southwards across the Loire, became the First army of the Loire under command of General Bourbaki. The left wing, composed of the XVIth and XVIIth corps, which had retired towards Beaugency and Marchenoir, became the Second army of the Loire under the command of Chanzy, reinforced by a fresh corps, the XXIst, and a fresh division.

Prince Frederick Charles directed the Grand-duke of Mecklenburg to pursue Chanzy towards Beaugency, and himself, with his three corps, set out to follow Bourbaki. Chanzy however had no intention of continuing his retreat. He posted his army for defence in a position reaching from the Loire at Beaugency to the forest of Marchenoir. There, on December 8th, he received the Grand-duke of Mecklenburg's attack. The Grand-duke made no progress, except on his left, where, by nightfall, his troops had gained

possession of Beaugency. But he found Chanzy so strong that he had to ask Prince Frederick Charles for help; and, by Moltke's orders, the Prince abandoned the pursuit of Bourbaki and sent his troops to the assistance of the Grand-duke on both banks of the Loire. The French Government now abandoned Tours (December 8th) and moved to Bordeaux. The Grand-duke renewed his attacks on the 9th, but again met with strong resistance. On the 10th, Chanzy attacked him, but could make no progress against the greater strength of the German artillery. On this day, Chanzy learned that the IXth German corps was at Vienne opposite Blois, whence it might turn his right, and that Bourbaki, sent in the wrong direction by Freycinet, could make no move to help him. He withdrew his army on the 11th, and conducted it in a skilful retreat behind the Loir at Vendôme and Fréteval. Prince Frederick Charles followed him, leaving only the Bavarian corps at Orleans, and intending to strike a crushing blow against Chanzy on the 17th. But, on the 16th, Chanzy again retreated and fell back to Le Mans. Prince Frederick Charles, learning that a post of Bavarian troops had been driven out of Gien, and, inferring that Bourbaki was moving north, left the Grand-duke on the Loir to watch Chanzy and himself hurried back to Orleans.

But no French attack on Orleans was imminent. Of Bourbaki's army the XVIIIth and XXth corps had suffered severely from their defeat at Beaune la Rolande and the XVth from the actions at Poupry and Orleans. Bourbaki, on taking command after the battle of Orleans, wished to retire his troops at once to Bourges, where he hoped that a period of rest, of regular food and of drill and a renewal of their equipment would fit them again for the field. But Freycinet ordered them to Aubigny, so that the German cavalry, advancing to Vierzon, cut them off from Chanzy; and, when at last, on December 13th, they reached Bourges,

they were in a worse state than when first defeated. Then Gambetta tried to persuade Bourbaki to begin a new advance from Nevers by Montargis and the valley of the Loing towards Fontainebleau. Bourbaki did not trust his troops to fight the veterans of Prince Frederick Charles; but, under the fascination of Gambetta's enthusiasm, he agreed to the project and on November 19th set his troops on the road from Bourges to Nevers. But on that day Gambetta received from Freycinet (from Bordeaux) a new plan which is best given in the words of Freycinet's letter:

> We should renounce for the present a direct march upon Paris. We should separate the XVIIIth and XXth corps from the XVth and transport them quickly by railway to Beaune. These two corps in conjunction with Garibaldi and Crémer would be destined to seize Dijon, which seems very easy to achieve, seeing that we should be employing 70,000 men against 35,000 to 40,000 of the enemy. During this time Bressolles and his army (the XXIVth corps from Lyons) would be taken by train to Besançon where they would pick up 15,000 or 20,000 of the troops of the garrison. This force of from 45,000 to 50,000 men, operating in concert with the victorious 70,000 from Dijon, would have no difficulty, even without striking a blow, in raising the siege of Belfort, and would present a compact mass of 100,000 men, capable of cutting the communications in the east in spite of all the efforts of the enemy.

Freycinet's scheme was based on a misapprehension of the situation as well as of the nature of war. The one object of the French was to raise the siege of Paris. That would be possible, if Chanzy and Bourbaki should defeat the Grand-duke of Mecklenburg and Prince Frederick Charles. For that purpose Chanzy and Bourbaki must cooperate. They must be brought so near together that neither of them could be defeated in isolation. To remove Bourbaki to the east was to leave Chanzy alone, exposed to the combined attack of the Grand-duke and Prince Frederick Charles. The relief of Belfort was not urgent, and Werder was too fully occupied by the troops already

in his neighbourhood to be able to have any direct effect on the campaign in the west. Nothing can be done in war except by fighting and beating the enemy's forces. If Bourbaki's army could not face that of Prince Frederick Charles, while the Grand-duke was occupied by Chanzy, what was the likelihood of its defeating the equally experienced troops of Werder? Freycinet's plan, as his letter showed, was a device for gaining the results of a victory without fighting, yet it had the approval of Gambetta and was accepted by Bourbaki. In the meantime, the troops of Prince Frederick Charles were collected at Orleans and those of the Grand-duke at Chartres, where they were to rest, until the approach of a strong body of the enemy should require a blow to be dealt.

Manteuffel, with part of his force, had marched to Rouen and was threatening Havre. After the battle of Amiens, the French troops of the north had been placed under the command of the energetic and judicious Faidherbe, who had just returned from Algeria, and had been expanded by him into two army corps, the XXIInd and XXIIIrd. Faidherbe determined to draw back Manteuffel before that general should reach Havre. He marched towards St Quentin, from which the Germans withdrew to La Fère, attacked and took Ham, and then marched towards Amiens, of which the Germans held the citadel, and occupied the line of the Somme above the city. The result was that Manteuffel hurriedly marched his troops from Dieppe and Rouen to Amiens. Faidherbe took position on the river Hallue, facing Amiens, with his left flank covered by the Somme. In this position, Manteuffel attacked him on December 23rd, without success; and he renewed the attack on the 24th, gaining some advantage; but Faidherbe withdrew his troops before they were demoralised and retreated in good order to Arras.

On December 21st the garrison of Paris again attacked

the besiegers, this time in the northern sector between the Marne and the Seine. The attack was to be opened by the capture of Le Bourget, after which the main assault was to be delivered across the plain to the east of that village. But the attempt on Le Bourget failed, and the chief assault was not delivered.

Towards the close of December the preparations for the bombardment of the city of Paris and for a regular attack on the forts were approaching completion. They were rendered possible by the fact that the railways and fortresses of north-eastern France were now almost entirely in the possession of the Germans[1]. The field-armies which covered the siege of Paris and protected the communications of the besiegers with Germany were grouped in four principal masses at Amiens, Chartres, Orleans and Dijon, the space between the last two being watched by the IInd corps at Montargis and the VIIth at Auxerre. In the middle of December, Werder at Dijon tried to shake off Crémer by attacking him at Nuits. But, though Crémer was driven out of Nuits, he kept his hold on the hills that overlook the town, and Werder found that he had enough to do in the effort to carry on the siege of Belfort, to observe Langres and to keep watch on the movements of Garibaldi and Crémer, especially as he could never be sure what forces might be gathering at Besançon.

On January 1st, 1871, Prince Frederick Charles was ordered to assume the offensive against Chanzy with the forces at Orleans and Chartres, leaving a division at Orleans and the IInd corps at Montargis, to guard against possible enterprises by Bourbaki, who was believed to be still at

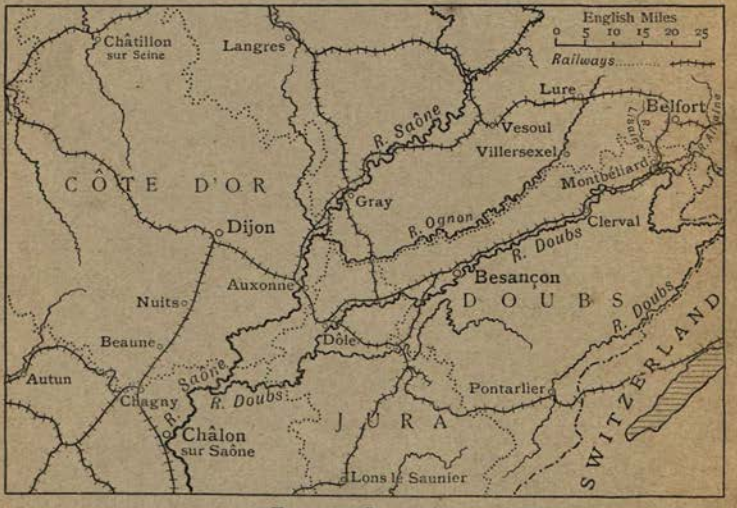
[1] The Germans had taken Laon (September 9th), Soissons (October 15th), Schlettstadt (October 24th), Verdun (November 3rd), Neufbrisach (November 10th), Thionville (November 24th), Phalsbourg (December 12th), and Montmédy (December 14th). Mézières capitulated on January 1st. Bitche was never taken.

Nevers. On January 5th, the advance-guards of both forces came in contact, beyond the Loir, with the outposts of Chanzy's army. A concentric advance gradually pushed back Chanzy's detachments; and, after five days' fighting, the two German armies were ready to combine their efforts against Chanzy's strong position in front of Le Mans. The attack began on January 10th, and was continued for three days. On the night of the 11th, Chanzy's troops were becoming exhausted by their continuous efforts, but held their ground at all the important points but one. On the extreme right, a body of raw troops, on being suddenly attacked by a small party in the dark, took fright and ran away, enabling the German Xth corps to turn the line which Chanzy was holding. On the 12th, Chanzy was obliged to order a retreat, which the exhaustion of his troops turned into a flight; so that the army with which he reached Laval on the Mayenne was in no condition to be led afresh against the enemy. He was, however, undaunted and set to work to restore and reorganise his forces for a further campaign.

Chanzy was the best of the generals of the republic. He inspired his troops with something of his own spirit, and obtained from them more than any other leader of new levies. If he overtaxed their strength, he at any rate drew after him the best and strongest of the German armies in the field and went far to exhaust the troops that assailed him. He was well seconded by Faidherbe, who, on January 3rd, suddenly attacked at Bapaume the army corps with which Göben was covering the siege of Péronne. Göben was driven in from the villages in his front and held his ground at Bapaume with difficulty; but Faidherbe thought it unwise, with his troops, who were still little better than recruits, to push the attack to a decisive result. Next morning, both sides had withdrawn—Göben to a position behind the Somme. Péronne had been only temporarily

relieved; the siege was resumed, and the place capitulated on January 9th. Faidherbe moved forward again, and Göben remained watching the passages of the Somme.

On December 27th the long-prepared bombardment of Paris began by a heavy cannonade directed against Mont Avron, which the French had occupied on the occasion of Ducrot's great sortie in November, and which they now abandoned. On January 5th the siege guns opened against the forts on the southern front; and, from this date onward, the bombardment extended to so much of the city of Paris as was within their range.



Eastern Campaign

By this time, Bourbaki had begun his ill-considered campaign in the east. Towards the close of December the XXIVth corps of Bressolles was moved by railway from Lyons to Besançon. The reports of this movement induced Werder to concentrate his forces at Vesoul, and at the end of December he evacuated Dijon, which was at once

occupied by Crémer's division from Beaune. Meanwhile the railway transport of the XVIIIth and XXth corps from Bourges and Nevers had begun on December 21st. The orders had only been given on the 19th, and the railway company had not had time to collect its rolling stock or to clear the line. The consequent delays were such that the troops were kept, in mid-winter, several days and nights in the train without sufficient food. When they had at length been detrained at Châlon and Chagny, they were again entrained to Dôle and Auxonne. It was the 2nd of January before they were collected at these places, ready to start. Bourbaki now asked for the XVth corps also, which was to have been left at Bourges. It was sent to him by railway through Besançon to Clerval on the Doubs; but its first troops did not detrain at Clerval until January 8th, nor its last until January 16th. The troop trains interfered with the supply trains, for which Clerval was the railhead; and the supply of the army was much embarrassed.

On January 2nd the XVIIIth, XXth and XXIVth corps set out from Dôle, Auxonne and Besançon towards Vesoul, near which fortress they were met on the 5th by Werder's reconnoitring parties, who took prisoners enough to enable Werder to discover that he had before him not only the troops from Lyons but also Bourbaki's army from the Loire. He telegraphed this information to Moltke who, on January 7th, ordered Manteuffel to hand over to Göben the troops in the north and to take command of the IInd and VIIth corps from Montargis and Auxerre and to march with them to Werder's assistance. On January 14th Manteuffel set out from Châtillon-sur-Seine for the Saône, marching between Dijon and Langres towards Gray. Crémer had left Dijon to join Bourbaki and was replaced there by Garibaldi, who, coming from Autun, was to prevent any German force from marching eastwards between Dijon

and Langres. Manteuffel played with Garibaldi by sending a brigade to attack Dijon. The attack of course could not succeed; but Garibaldi did not move, and Manteuffel, who had marched past him, reached the Saône at Gray with his advance-guard on January 19th.

On January 5th Bourbaki, finding Werder in position at Vesoul, determined to turn his left so as to interpose between him and Belfort, and for that purpose moved eastward. On the 8th his three corps were approaching Villersexel on both sides of the Ognon; and the advance-guard of the centre column reached the town. Werder, whose cavalry was closely watching the French, supposed Bourbaki to be making for Belfort, and resolved to anticipate him on the river Lisaine, behind which he could cover the investment. To gain time for this movement he must delay Bourbaki. Accordingly on the 9th he attacked the French advance-guard at Villersexel with 15,000 men, while behind this body he moved the rest of his force across the Ognon nearer to the Lisaine and Belfort. Werder's detachment was attacked by Bourbaki's left and centre corps and by dark was driven out of Villersexel. Next morning Bourbaki telegraphed the news of a victory to Bordeaux; but, instead of renewing the attack or pushing on towards Belfort, he kept all his three corps halted. Werder, finding that Bourbaki did not attack him, marched off, covered by the detachment which had fought at Villersexel. By the 11th he had his whole force behind the Lisaine, with Belfort five or six miles behind him. Villersexel is sixteen miles distant from the Lisaine; yet it was not until the 15th that Bourbaki reached that river. The country is hilly and wooded, with many paths but few roads; it offers no field for the movements of masses of troops, but every facility for stubborn defence by small bodies. The troops had to be fed, and all the waggons must start from the railhead at Clerval. The ground was deep in snow, the roads

slippery, and the rivers frozen. In such conditions it was difficult to move or to supply 150,000 men. Bourbaki began to realise that he had been rash in undertaking a campaign in winter in a difficult country with troops whom he had not trusted to act on the easier ground between the Loire and the Seine. It is true that he was harassed by perpetual telegrams from Freycinet and by Freycinet's agent, sent to keep an eye on him. But he lacked confidence in his troops and in himself, and the determination to succeed or perish in the attempt. By the night of January 14th the greater part of the XVth corps from Clerval was on the north bank of the Doubs, within five miles of Montbéliard; Crémer's division, which had marched from Dijon through Gray and Vesoul, was at Lure; and between these two bodies stood the XVIIIth, XXth and XXIVth corps.

Werder made good use of the time given him for preparing his position, eleven miles long, from where the Lisaine crosses the Lure—Belfort road to Montbéliard, at the confluence of the Lisaine with the Allaine. The Lisaine is too deep to be forded and runs along a valley with steep wooded sides. Every crossing is approached by a defile through the woods and commanded by the hills opposite; and on those hills, in his centre and on his left, Werder posted heavy guns from his siege-train, as well as on the strongly-built castle of Montbéliard and on the heights near it. The right of his position in the country traversed by the Lure—Belfort road is comparatively open, admits of free movement and offers no good defensive position. Here, Werder did not occupy the ground strongly, but carefully distributed his 50,000 troops along his front, and arranged for them to sleep at night under cover. He had reserves ready to move to any point requiring support. Yet he felt that a determined attack must destroy him. On the 14th, he telegraphed to Moltke, suggesting that it would be prudent to raise the siege of Belfort. Moltke replied that

he must stand and fight, and that Manteuffel's approach would soon produce its effect.

At length, on January 15th, Bourbaki delivered his attack. He had not properly reconnoitred the position nor discovered how far north it extended. Consequently, he neglected Werder's weak right and threw three corps against his strong left and centre; he even ordered Crémer to diverge southward from the Lure—Belfort road, so that he struck upon the centre, instead of upon the right, of Werder's position. No progress was made, except that the French entered the town of Montbéliard, though they failed to take the castle or to silence its guns. The attack was renewed on the 16th, with no better effect, against Werder's left and centre; but, by evening, the French left had pushed back the German right. During the night Werder brought up his reserves to his right, and next morning made a counter-attack, which the French left wing repulsed, without, however, succeeding in its own attempted advance. Bourbaki knew that Manteuffel was coming up from the west and would in a few days be approaching Besançon. His own last line of supply and of retreat passed through Besançon and then by road and railway through Lons-le-Saunier to Lyons. To stay where he was would be to be caught between the armies of Werder and Manteuffel. When his generals, on the 17th, proposed once more to attack Werder's right on the 18th, he declined further to risk the existence of the army and ordered a retirement, which began on the 19th. During the three days' fighting, the Germans had lost 1200 men, the French 5000. The retreat was continued to Besançon, where the army arrived on the 22nd, broken down by privations and dispirited by failure. Behind it marched Werder, and in front was Manteuffel, who had crossed the Saône at Gray on the 20th, and then turned south, in order to cut off its retreat towards Lons-le-Saunier and Lyons. Bourbaki, when he reached

Besançon, was in a situation resembling that of MacMahon after the battle of Beaumont. In his front, beyond the Doubs, and to his right were Werder's troops, and to his left Manteuffel's two army corps. The only road of escape open to him was behind him to Pontarlier, beyond which was the Swiss frontier. There was indeed a mountain-road from Pontarlier running parallel to the Swiss frontier in the direction of Lyons; but it passed through a series of defiles which could easily be held against an army, and to which Manteuffel's troops were nearer than his own. There were not supplies in Besançon for more than a day or two; and retreat to Pontarlier was inevitable. Gambetta and Freycinet telegraphed to Bourbaki reproaches as bitter as their congratulations on the action at Villersexel had been excessive. The unhappy general broke down, and tried to take his own life.

The bombardment of Paris caused the population to demand a fresh sortie; and the Government, against the judgment of its military advisers, prepared for a last effort. Freycinet, from Bordeaux, telegraphed to Faidherbe urging him to give what help he could. Faidherbe set out from Albert on January 16th, to march towards La Fère, with a view to interrupting the German communications. He was met, on January 19th, by Göben, Manteuffel's successor in the northern command, at St Quentin. The rawness of Faidherbe's troops enabled Göben to attack him on both sides of the Somme, spreading his army in a semicircle, which overlapped the French on both wings. The attack on each wing was successful, and Faidherbe had to be content to escape with the bulk of his army unpursued.

On the same day, at Paris, 83,000 men were collected near Mont Valérien and delivered an attack against Buzenval, La Bergerie and Montretout. They were repulsed with heavy loss.

On the 21st the Germans began further siege operations,

this time against the forts at St Denis, bombarding them heavily for several days and preparing for an assault. The provisions of Paris had run so low that, in a few days, the population would be without food. On the 21st, at a council of war, Trochu was relieved of the governorship and Ducrot resigned his command. Vinoy was then appointed to command the troops. On the 23rd Jules Favre went to Versailles to negotiate for a cessation of hostilities. On the 26th it was agreed that hostilities at Paris should cease immediately and the transport of provisions to the city be permitted; and, on the 28th, an armistice was signed by Bismarck and Favre, of which the terms were that the forts of Paris were to be surrendered and the *enceinte* disarmed, while the garrison, except 12,000 men who were required to keep order, were to become prisoners of war and to give up their arms, though they were at liberty to remain in Paris. There was to be a cessation of hostilities throughout France except in the departments of Doubs, Jura, and Côte d'Or and round the fortress of Belfort. The cessation of hostilities was to begin in the provinces on the 31st and to last for twenty-one days. During this time elections were to be held for the National Assembly, to meet at Bordeaux on February 5th, which was to decide whether or not the war should be continued, and, if not, upon what terms peace was to be made. This was the end of the war, except in the districts excluded from the armistice.

At Besançon General Clinchant succeeded Bourbaki in the command and carried on the retreat to Pontarlier. Manteuffel pressed hard behind him, and, by the 29th, had occupied the gorges by which alone the army could escape. His columns then converged towards Pontarlier. During the fighting on the 29th, the French suddenly ceased firing. Clinchant had received word of the armistice, but not of the fact that the army which he commanded was excluded from its operation. The result was that fighting ceased during

the 30th; but Manteuffel ordered its resumption, and, on February 1st, the German troops, having in the meantime moved forward, delivered their attack on Pontarlier. But, in the interval, Clinchant had come to an arrangement with the Swiss Government; and, on February 1st, 80,000 French troops crossed the Swiss frontier and laid down their arms.

Belfort, also, was excluded from the armistice; and, as its commander, the gallant Colonel Denfert-Rochereau, continued his defence, the siege went on until February 15th, when, in consequence of the negotiations at Versailles, the French Government sent him explicit orders, in obedience to which he surrendered the fortress and marched out at the head of his troops with the honours of war.

In this war, as in all others, the elements of victory and defeat were present in the previous conditions of the belligerent States. Prussia, having made herself the representative of the idea of a German nation, had a clearly conceived purpose, for the attainment of which she had schooled the people of Germany. The army had been assiduously organised and increased and its generals educated. The unity of command was maintained from beginning to end. Moltke asserted his will with extraordinary persistence. After the premature and confused attack at Spicheren, he did not hesitate to interfere with the commanders of the First and Second armies; and, in the marches towards Châlons and towards Sedan, he took charge of the whole movement. During the siege of Paris, he directed all the armies with a firm hand.

France, in 1870, was in no respect in condition to carry on a national war. Her Government was weak; for it represented only one of several rival factions, each of which was waiting its opportunity. The Emperor Napoleon III had to think first of maintaining his own position and

therefore of conciliating public opinion. By that necessity he was hampered in his military preparations, and even in the direction of his armies in the field; for he dared not retreat even when retreat offered the only hope of ultimate victory. The republican Government which succeeded him was also conscious of representing but one of several parties and of the need to propitiate public opinion, especially that of Paris. Its members looked with suspicion on those who were not of their party, denouncing the Emperor's generals as traitors and declining to employ the Orleanist princes.

The centralisation of government and of all intellectual life at Paris led the Government of National Defence to identify the defence of Paris with that of France, collecting in the capital troops and arms which ought to have been at hand for the new provincial armies, and leaving to the provinces the task of their own organisation, for which, by disuse, they had become disqualified.

Above all, the military institutions of the country had been neglected and diverted from their true end of national defence. The people and the army had become strangers to one another, so that the army was a state within the state. There was no school of generalship, and therefore, in the crisis, no general qualified for command. Accordingly, the armies were never commanded and, for want of a leader, were beaten one after the other. At Wörth MacMahon, left to himself, lacked the force of character to avoid a battle which was bound to be a crushing defeat. Spicheren, which ought to have been a victory, was turned into a defeat by Bazaine's culpable inaction. The difference of view between Napoleon III and Bazaine, and the consequent lack of decision, led to the useless battle of Borny, to the lost opportunity of Mars-la-Tour, and to defeat instead of a temporary success at Gravelotte. MacMahon's army was thrown away at Sedan, in obedience to a personal, not a national, motive. If it had marched from Châlons to

Orleans, the subsequent action of the improvised provincial armies would have had a very different prospect of success. The lack of preparation before the war had left the French fortresses in no condition for prolonged resistance. Accordingly, the fall of Strassburg allowed Werder to disperse the levies in the east before they had acquired the consistency of an army. The fall of Metz permitted the armies of Prince Frederick Charles and of Manteuffel to operate against the troops with which Gambetta sought to relieve Paris; while the capture of the other fortresses secured supplies from Germany for all the German armies. The new French levies were led against the enemy after only a few weeks' preparation by inexperienced officers; yet their resistance was far from contemptible. Led by d'Aurelle, by Chanzy and by Faidherbe, they astonished the German leaders by their courage in attack and their tenacity in defence. But Gambetta, by encouraging Freycinet to act as commander-in-chief, crippled the forces which he had created. He failed to secure harmony between his own plans and those of Trochu. He allowed Freycinet to ruin the army of d'Aurelle by his rash interference, that of Bourbaki by his wild project for the relief of Belfort, and that of Chanzy by thus depriving it of the only possible support.

II

The diplomatic history of the great war of 1870–1 reduces itself, from the point of view of German history, to an account of the efforts of Bismarck and his fellow-workers for the twofold purpose of concluding a peace satisfactory to German aspirations and of establishing the new German empire[1]. The chief difficulties in the way of these

[1] The most elaborate work on the peace negotiations is the *Histoire Diplomatique de la Guerre Franco-Allemande* (2 vols., Paris, 1875) by

efforts were, again, twofold. In the first place, the intervention of the neutral Powers in any negotiations for peace had, if possible, to be averted. In the second, the resistance to the consummation of the unity of non-Austrian Germany, still maintained in the states of the German south-west, had to be overcome and converted into willing cooperation.

After the victories, early in August, of Wörth and Spicheren, any question of an alliance with France was at an end for Austria-Hungary, while even on armed mediation by the dual monarchy the Hungarian Minister-president Andrássy imposed a persistent veto. Italian statesmanship, including even King Victor Emmanuel's[1], was now chiefly intent upon withstanding the pressure still exercised upon it by the French Government, to show the gratitude which is so rare a growth in politics. The British Government, sincerely desirous of preserving its own neutrality (not, as was widely believed in Germany, in order to supply France with the materials of warfare), had, before the outbreak of the war, declined the Italian proposal for a league of neutrals in which Austria should be invited, and the other Powers at liberty, to join; and, on August 6th, had declined to enter into a similar scheme. But it had readily agreed, three days later, to a revised convention between Great Britain and Italy submitted by Carlo Cadorna, Italian envoy in London, according to which no step affecting the neutrality of other Powers, or connected with any attempt at mediation, was to be taken by either of these two Powers without the knowledge of the other.

A. Sorel, who was himself a member of the Diplomatic Delegacy formed at Tours under de Chaudordy. The narrative of G. Hanotaux, in vol. I of his *Histoire de la France Contemporaine* (Paris, 1903), is at once more luminous and more generally interesting. For other authorities, see *Bibliography*.

[1] '*Pauvre Empereur—mais je l'ai échappé belle.*' (Ollivier, vol. XVI, p. 523.)

The object of this so-called 'League of Neutrals,' to which it was hoped to obtain the adherence of other Powers, was differently interpreted by the Foreign Ministers of Great Britain and Italy respectively; in any case, it did neither harm nor good to France. Russia, at first, favoured the scheme in the hope that it might lead to a conference where she could bring forward the question of the Black Sea and the revision of the treaty of 1856; Austria was only willing to enter into the league on condition that it should be accompanied by a joint overture for mediation. But to this both Great Britain and Russia, from different motives, objected; and thus no mediation at all was attempted. The passing effort of Tsar Alexander, a little later, to influence his uncle King William in favour of France was of a purely personal character; and no part was taken in the transaction by either Gortchakoff or Bismarck, who hated one another cordially.

The brilliant success of the German arms naturally brought about an exaltation of German national feeling unknown since 1813–5. The cry which arose for the permanent recovery of the lost provinces of the old Empire found an echo far and near; for the sake of Germany's security, as Strauss argued to Renan, the guarantee of an impassable frontier must be secured; the opportunity, as Treitschke insisted in an essay armed *cap-à-pie* with reasons and illustrations, must not be lost or deferred; so much blood, as the official organ of the Prussian Government declared, must not have been shed in vain. Public meetings at Berlin, Munich and Stuttgart demanded a united empire and a protective frontier; and at Carlsruhe the Baden Government (September 2nd) hastened to be the first officially in the field with the same double demand. So early as August 14th, a German Governor-General of Alsace (Count von Bismarck-Bohlen) was appointed; and, a week later, the limits of his Government were definitely

fixed. They included the *arrondissements* of Metz and Thionville, with the rest of what was afterwards described as 'German-speaking' Lorraine; so that the line of the new Franco-German frontier was now practically laid down[1].

Thus, when, after the capitulation of Sedan (September 2nd) and the promulgation of the *déchéance* of the imperial Government at Paris (September 4th), France still carried on the war, it was really continued on the issue of the annexation of Alsace and part of Lorraine; and it was to this that (September 6th) Jules Favre, the new Minister of Foreign Affairs, proclaimed, in unforgettable words, a policy of absolute resistance. When he proceeded to solicit British, Austrian and Italian mediation on the basis, not of a territorial cession, but of a pecuniary indemnity, Granville, with Bernstorff's assent, undertook to transmit to each of the belligerents the proposals made by the other; and there were some more communications between the neutral Great Powers. But no further effort could be made, so long as the Government of National Defence had not been recognised by the Powers, of whom, as yet, the United States alone had taken this step.

Meanwhile, in Germany the determination grew to conclude no peace without the desired cession, and to make this conquest the foundation of German unity. A 'pacifist' protest by the veteran radical Johann Jacoby at Königsberg led to his prompt imprisonment in a fortress[2]; while the irritation against any form of neutral intervention increased. On September 13th and 14th, Bismarck addressed two important circulars to the diplomatic agents of the North-German Confederation declaring, as fundamental principles of German policy, first, that the conditions of peace in no wise

[1] It was that of the *carte au liséré vert* prepared by the German General Staff.

[2] He afterwards joined the Social Democrats, but played no prominent part among them.

depended on the form of the French Government, and, secondly, that territorial cessions (meaning, of course Alsace and part of Lorraine) were essential to the security of Germany. About the same date, Granville wrote to Morier at Darmstadt, to deny that the so-called League of Neutrals was intended to prevent Germany from imposing territorial cessions upon France.

Yet it was at London that Thiers began his famous series of visits to the chief Courts of Europe—justly famous, as forming an attempt, in the circumstances little short of heroic, to avert the consequences of a policy for the ulterior causes of which no man had been more deeply responsible than Thiers himself. He could not succeed in changing Granville's political attitude, or even obtain the recognition of the existing French Government, whose general administration had now been transferred to Tours, the Foreign Minister, Jules Favre, remaining at Paris. Thiers, therefore, passed on to Vienna, where he found Beust free from any prejudice against the new French Government, but with nothing to offer except good wishes, including the sincere desire that he might relieve Austria as well as benefit France by securing the goodwill of the Government of the Tsar. At Petersburg, Thiers saw his opportunity for a more venturous line of action, hoping to secure Russian intervention in return for a promise to support the Russian wish to be rid of the naval restriction imposed upon her in the Black Sea by the Treaty of 1856. He met with kind words from both Tsar and Chancellor; but he was not aware that Prussia had already accepted Russia's Eastern design (if indeed it was not what Lord Lyons's biographer ventures to call 'a put-up job' between them), and thereby rendered the assent of France of relatively small value. He was led to believe that the Tsar would exert himself for a peace without territorial cessions; but the effort was not carried far, and it became clear to Thiers

that an Austrian alliance with France would mean a Russian alliance with Prussia. He obtained, however, a promise that direct official relations would be facilitated between himself and the German headquarters at Versailles. His immediate mission ended with a second visit to Vienna, and one to Florence (October 13th), where his eloquence called forth much sympathy and, as elsewhere, at least served to raise the credit of the new French Government[1].

Before this, the French Government of National Defence had entered into direct negotiations with Bismarck. At first, he had thought of transacting with Napoleon direct; but at Sedan the latter had referred him to the Regency, and this was now overthrown. On September 15th, however, one Régnier, a French resident in England, who after dabbling in medical and other studies had now thought of trying his hand at private diplomacy, and who played a part so serviceable, on the whole, to Bismarck that it is difficult not to believe some understanding to have existed between them, presented himself before the Empress Eugénie at Hastings, and there came into possession of some photographs of the place signed by the Prince Imperial, with an affectionate message to his father. Armed with no other certificate, but provided with a Prussian passport, Régnier appeared at Ferrières, the country-seat of Baron A. de Rothschild, where Bismarck was quartered, on September 19th, the day after the arrival there of Jules Favre, who had been granted a meeting by the Chancellor and had already conferred with him near by and at the *château* itself. As for Régnier, Bismarck made use of his arrival in order to agitate if not disconcert Favre, and then dismissed the

[1] It was about this time (October 1st) that the head of the penultimate imperial Ministry, Ollivier, appealed by letter to King William against the intended annexations (Ollivier, vol. XVII, pp. 563–4).

adventurer, who went his way to Metz[1]. The final result of the meeting between Bismarck and Jules Favre has been already noticed[2]: the war continued as before.

Early in October, however, Strassburg being by this time in German hands, Bismarck took occasion through two American visitors (General Burnside and Colonel Forbes) to place himself again in contact with Jules Favre; and, about the same time (October 4th), he made public a circular to his diplomatic agents, warning France against the consequences of an attempt to carry on the war *à outrance*. But, a few days later, the Governor-General of Alsace proclaimed that Strassburg was now, and would always remain, a German city; and the council summoned by the Government decided that the propositions brought before Favre (on October 9th) by his American visitors, which virtually represented no advance upon those offered for the armistice, were inadmissible. Trochu induced his council not even to leave the door open for subsequent negotiation. Thus, this attempt, to which the friendly relations between Prussia and the United States had seemed to lend some chance of success, likewise broke down; but it served Bismarck's purpose of suggesting which side was intractable.

There is no need here for more than a reference to the obscure negotiations carried on at Metz by Régnier, who returned thence to Ferrières on September 25th with empty hands, and was soon dismissed by Bismarck. A day or two later, General Bourbaki, who had travelled with Régnier to near the end of his journey, visited the Empress at Chislehurst. But she refused to enter into any transaction with him, or to interfere with the action of the Government of National Defence. Bazaine's attempts to effect an

[1] Régnier's own account of his doings was afterwards published at Brussels under the title *Quel est votre nom?*

[2] *Ante*, p. 499.

understanding with the Empress, or with the Emperor at Wilhelmshöhe, having broken down, he, on October 12th, sent General Boyer to interview Bismarck at Versailles. Without offering any more advantageous peace terms, Bismarck suggested to Boyer that Bazaine's army might be allowed to leave Metz with the honours of war, if it continued in allegiance to the imperial Government, and if the latter accepted the German conditions of peace. On the 22nd, after returning for instructions to Metz, Boyer waited on the Empress at Chislehurst; but, by the advice of a council of her advisers, she rejected the proposals of which he was the bearer. With Bazaine, Bismarck broke off all negotiations on the 24th; and on the 27th the fortress surrendered.

Both Metz and Strassburg were now in German hands; the fate of Paris was at stake: and Thiers, who had just arrived at Tours to give an account of his mission to the European Courts, was convinced that an armistice, as the only possible step towards peace, must be negotiated. The delegates at Tours came to the same conclusion, especially as it was urged by both the British and the Russian Governments, the former seeking to obtain from the Prussian a promise of moderate conditions of peace; and through each of the two neutral Governments a safe-conduct was obtained for Thiers to the German head-quarters.

The peace negotiation which hereupon opened was carried on under the new aspect of European politics brought about by the Russian denunciation, on October 31st, of the Black Sea clause of the Treaty of Paris of 1856. This proceeding isolated Great Britain (whose interests Odo Russell was specially sent to Versailles to watch), and rendered her Government more desirous than ever to preserve neutrality towards the Franco-German conflict. For the settlement of the Black Sea problem, Odo Russell

and Bismarck agreed upon the expedient of a European conference; and, as Prussia had not signed the original protocol in 1856, it was by her that the signatory Powers were invited to attend, Great Britain, however, inviting France. The French Government, which, as Lord Granville put it, would have proposed a 'general conflagration,' only accepted the principle of the Conference after much pressure; while, before its first meeting in London, Bismarck refused to entertain the thought of a consideration by it of the Franco-German conditions of peace.

Thus, without any hope of foreign support, and embarrassed by a speech of Jules Favre to the Paris mayors repudiating the 'abandonment of two provinces,' Thiers, on November 1st, entered with Bismarck into a discussion, at Versailles, on the conditions of an armistice, or (as it was called by the French statesman, whose chief strength lay in his hopefulness) vol. I of the peace. It has been seen how, on the day before that of their meeting, an insurrection had broken out in Paris, and how the whole negotiation, which might perhaps have saved Metz and the whole of Lorraine for France[1], broke down on November 6th. But its resumption could not be long deferred, as new disasters overtook France. Though she had 'in principle' accepted the London Conference, it opened, on January 17th, 1871, without the appearance of the French plenipotentiary, the Foreign Minister Jules Favre, who had a task nearer at hand to perform. If he declined to enter the lion's den, who would do so? After, with difficulty, obtaining from his colleagues, on January 23rd, the necessary powers for the conclusion of an armistice, with the object of holding the elections to the National Assembly, he was, on the same evening, in Bismarck's presence at Sèvres.

Of the critical discussion which ensued, the result has already been summarised[2]. Bismarck had begun by

[1] So Thiers told Lord Lyons (*Life*, p. 257). [2] See p. 532, *ante*.

frightening his visitor with the idea of a negotiation with the imperialists (whose activity had by no means come to an end with the disappearance of Régnier from the scene: Clément Duvernois, who had come from Wilhelmshöhe, was still at Versailles); but he had then magnanimously calmed Favre's apprehensions on this head. On the other hand, the latter contrived to make Bismarck believe that there was still a supply of food in Paris for six weeks—there was actually enough for little more than as many days. The discussion hinged, in the first instance, upon the demand for the entry of the German army into Paris, vehemently opposed by Favre, and, though desired by the King and his army, not viewed wholly without apprehension on the German side; so that the matter was left unsettled for the present. Further points were the disbandment of the French National Guards, for which Favre too confidently undertook to make himself responsible; the Paris war contribution, which after much haggling was fixed at 200 million francs; and the surrender of Belfort, which was deferred till a general line of demarcation should have been agreed upon. Thus, the armistice, which in the first instance Favre had negotiated on his own responsibility, and then, with the assent of his colleagues, had signed for, practically, the whole of France, was concluded on January 28th. Paris was saved; or, if the Assembly declared for a continuance of the war, the capital lay at the mercy of the foe. If otherwise, the armistice was the virtual conclusion of the war, as, on receiving Favre's ambiguous telegram, Gambetta indignantly concluded it to be. Both he and Chanzy denounced the action of the Paris Government as having sacrificed the army of Bourbaki, the last hope of France.

The elections for the National Assembly took place on February 8th. The attempt to exclude former servants of the Empire had been only partially successful; but Gambetta, who had pressed it, had resigned; and (though

not in Paris) a large majority had been secured for the party in favour of peace. Thiers, its indispensable leader, had been chosen in twenty-six constituencies. For the negotiations which would follow, there was little or no hope from the neutral Powers. Granville's well-meant suggestion that the place of Jules Favre, who, of course, had not put in an appearance at the London Conference, might be taken by another plenipotentiary, and that, without formally inviting a discussion on the peace, he might bring the subject to the notice of his colleagues, led to nothing[1]. The opportunity (if such it was) was lost, and it was not until the last sitting of the Conference (March 13th) that the new French ambassador in London, the Duc de Broglie, attended as plenipotentiary. European sympathy with France at this crisis of her fortunes, although it was most certainly on the increase, only found expression in isolated quarters; and the eloquent protest in the Bordeaux Assembly by the deputy Keller in the name of his colleagues from Alsace and Lorraine (February 17th)[2] was practically answered by the election of Thiers as Chief of the Executive Power of the French Republic. Encouraged, on the one hand, by the official recognition of his Government by Great Britain, Austria-Hungary and Italy (February 17th), and, on the other, by the consent of all French parties, to adhere to the internal truce (the so-called *pacte de Bordeaux*) announced by him to the world (February 19th), Thiers undertook to conduct the peace negotiations in person, with the assistance of Jules Favre, who had remained Minister of Foreign Affairs. Though he believed that the German demand would extend to the whole of Lorraine,

[1] See, as to this necessarily rather involved proposal, the dispatch to Lyons from Granville, *ap.* Sorel, vol. II, p. 216; and cf. Lyons's view, *Life*, p. 270.

[2] Hanotaux (vol. I, p. 207) regards the discussion on the subject as a mistake, since Bismarck had not yet formulated his demand.

he was convinced (and both Prussian and Russian diplomacy had done what was in their power to encourage this conviction) that direct negotiation with Germany was now preferable to mediation; and no mediation was at hand. Bismarck's conditions were, as a matter of fact, fixed; and the French Government made no further appeal to the Powers to intervene for their mitigation.

Thus, Thiers arrived at Paris on February 20th, and on the 21st, the date settled for the expiration of the armistice at midnight, entered upon the negotiation with Bismarck at Versailles. Prepared as he was for the worst, he thought it advisable to make the meeting personal in character, by leaving Jules Favre behind him. Nevertheless, although the prolongation of the armistice to the 26th was readily agreed upon, the conditions proposed by Bismarck appalled Thiers. The cession of territory demanded was still that which Bismarck had indicated in the preceding autumn—Alsace and 'German' Lorraine, including Metz. The indemnity which France was called upon to pay was six milliards of francs. An audience granted to Thiers by the German Emperor (as he now was), at which the Crown-prince was present, left the situation unchanged; but the French Chief of the Executive was encouraged by his colleagues in the peace commission named by the Assembly to continue the negotiation. It made, however, small progress on the 22nd; and on the following day, the offer, prompted by Bismarck, of the great Berlin banker Bleichröder and the Prussian millionaire Count Henckel von Donnersmarck, to finance the payment of the French 'ransom' was declined by Thiers and his advisers. Bismarck, hereupon, announced to Thiers and Favre, who this time accompanied him, that the contribution would be reduced by a milliard; further he would not go. The discussion next turned on the entry of the German troops into Paris, and the territorial cession. On the former demand, Bismarck felt himself obliged to

insist; the latter, he, as well as the Crown-prince, would have been prepared to reduce by giving up, or perhaps dismantling, Metz; but the military chiefs and the Emperor persisted. When the French negotiators found that there was no chance of preserving Metz for France, the retention of Belfort became the *nodus pacis*. After consulting Moltke, Bismarck informed the French negotiators that they must choose between the military entry into Paris and the loss of Belfort; and they resolved to submit to the former alternative. When the Emperor William was finally asked for his decision, he preferred to renounce the acquisition of Belfort and to maintain the entry of his troops into Paris.

So matters stood at Versailles on February 24th. The Duc de Broglie, who arrived in London on the evening of that day, made a last attempt to obtain the intervention of the British Government in the peace negotiations. Inasmuch, however, as he had no information as to the German demands except as to the war contribution (since reduced), it was on this head only that Granville addressed a by no means strenuous remonstrance to Bismarck, by whom it was received with much impatience. The negotiations at Versailles on the 25th accordingly displayed a far more acrimonious spirit on his part, which was only allayed by the conciliatory advice of Baron Alphonse de Rothschild, summoned by Thiers with Bismarck's assent. Thus, on the 26th, the Preliminaries of Peace could actually be signed—a proceeding in which the plenipotentiaries of Bavaria, Württemberg and Baden took part. France ceded to the German Empire the departments of the Upper and the Lower Rhine, with the 'new department' of the Moselle —in other words, Alsace and rather more than one-third of Lorraine, including Metz[1]. Belfort, the loss of which would have opened the road between Jura and Vosges

[1] The ceded portion of Lorraine numbered rather more than 480 as against rather more than 1,100,000 inhabitants.

into France, was left to her. A contribution of five milliards of francs was imposed on her, of which enormous total (it amounted to seven times that imposed by France upon truncated Prussia in 1807), one milliard was to be paid within the year 1871, the remaining four within three years from the ratification of the Preliminaries, the dates of the successive payments not being specified. After this ratification, the Germans were to evacuate Paris and the forts on the left bank of the Seine, and, next, the departments on the same bank. The French troops, with the exception of 40,000 men (needed for keeping order at Paris) were to withdraw to the left bank of the Seine till the conclusion of a definitive peace. The further evacuation of France was to proceed in proportion as the first and second milliards of the contribution were paid off. For the payment of the last three milliards, six departments, with Belfort—constituting a considerable portion of the French north-east between Marne and Moselle—were to be held in pledge by Germany, unless further financial guarantees were settled for substitution. An additional convention provided that, from March 1st to the exchange of ratifications, 30,000 German troops to occupy the region (*quartier*) of the Champs Élysées in Paris; and the existing armistice was prolonged to March 12th.

On March 1st, the National Assembly at Bordeaux, after voting the downfall of the imperial dynasty and thus identifying the Republic with the policy of peace, ratified the Preliminaries; and on the following day the ratifications were duly exchanged at Versailles between Bismarck and Jules Favre, who had without delay made his way back from Bordeaux. On March 1st, 30,000 German troops entered the Élysée quarter of Paris; but arrangements could not be made for the Emperor to accompany them, and Bismarck turned his horse's head at the Arc de Triomphe. Before noon

on the 3rd, the German troops had quitted Paris. A few days later, Bismarck was back at Berlin, leaving behind him as plenipotentiary with the French Government the Saxon General von Fabrice, who was of great service in adjusting the military provisions of the treaty and the conventions supplementary to it. On March 11th, the Germans quitted Versailles, where the outbreak of an insurrection at Paris on the 18th and 19th forced the Government of the French Republic to take up its seat.

The repatriation of the French armies had become a necessity, if the insurrectionary Government of the Commune at Paris was to be suppressed and if the Government of the Republic was to be capable of carrying out the Preliminaries of Peace and, above all, the payment of the war contribution fixed by them. On the 28th, a convention, approved by Bismarck, was signed, which empowered the French Government to gather round Paris 80,000 men (including those national and mobile guards who had come in to Versailles), on condition that they should be employed only for the re-establishment of order at home. A definitive peace was even more desirable for the French than it was for the German Government; and a final stroke of fortune thus enabled Bismarck to make its conditions even more stringent than those of the Preliminaries.

The final conditions were first discussed at Brussels (from March 28th), the plenipotentiaries including the French and German envoys there (Barons Baude and von Balan) and Count Arnim. The French plenipotentiaries resisted the additional demands ruthlessly pressed upon them by the German, who were determined not to forego the advantage derived from the state of things at Paris, inasmuch as it weakened the French Government and alienated from it the sympathies of Europe. (The German General Staff had offered to join with the French army in an investment which would starve out the Commune.) This difference,

and the desire of the French Government to raise the numbers of its army to the highest total obtainable, seemed to threaten a rupture; and Bismarck went so far as to re-open negotiations with the Emperor Napoleon, which proved futile, since the latter asked for the restitution of Metz. In the end, Bismarck put a close to the discussion of further guarantees on the part of France, by breaking off the Brussels Conference and proposing a final meeting, 'half-way,' at Frankfort, on May 6th between himself and Jules Favre, who, accordingly, was furnished by Thiers's Government with full powers, subject to his reporting to it before signing the treaty.

At Frankfort, Jules Favre was, in matters of finance, assisted by Pouyer-Quertier; Bismarck would not allow him the diplomatic aid of Le Clerc. The question of the war contribution was here, once more, reviewed. The Preliminaries had provided that the Germans should withdraw their troops in sequence to the successive payments of the contribution; but Bismarck now demanded fresh guarantees on this and other heads, by way of *ultimatum*. Either the French troops outside Paris were to withdraw to the further side of the Loire, or the French positions and neutral zone on the right bank of the Seine and the access to Paris on that side were to be placed in German hands, while the German evacuation was to be restricted to these departments, and to be postponed till the condition of Paris was such as to secure the fulfilment by the French Government of its obligations under the treaty. In vain the French plenipotentiaries urged the plain conclusion of a definitive treaty; the fall of the Commune, they said, was imminent, and the first half-milliard in readiness—why was the occupation to be indefinitely prolonged? At last, it was agreed that, after the payment of the first milliard-and-a-half, the evacuation of the fifteen departments indicated in the Preliminaries should proceed as a matter of right;

the additional guarantees demanded by Germany were, in the main, accepted; the frontier round Belfort was settled; it was agreed that the repatriation of French prisoners should be expedited; the conditions of option by Alsace-Lorrainers of their future country were arranged; and, the Versailles Government having notified its concurrence, the Peace of Frankfort was signed (May 10th).

The Treaty of Frankfort provided that the departments of Somme and Seine-Inférieure, and the still occupied portions of the department of Eure, should be evacuated after the ratification and the payment of half-a-milliard; as for the departments of Oise, Seine-et-Oise, Seine-et-Marne, and Seine, including the Paris forts on the right bank of the river, they were not to be quitted until the German Government should consider that order had been sufficiently restored in France. In any event, this evacuation was to take place after the payment of a milliard-and-a-half. (The Versailles Preliminaries had only required half-a-milliard.) The Treaty further imposed conditions as to mode of payment not exacted in the Preliminaries, and increased the severity of these, both by limiting the garrison of Paris to 80,000 and by restricting the rest of the French army to the left bank of the Loire, till the Paris forts should have been evacuated as aforesaid. Another clause in the Treaty gave the German troops the right of levying requisitions in the occupied parts of France, if the French Government fell behind in the fulfilment of its obligations; and there were several irksome new provisions as to commerce and navigation and as to domicile and naturalisation of Germans in France. The only clear, though dearly-purchased, gain to France in the Treaty was the fixing of a satisfactory military *rayon* round heroic Belfort, in exchange for a territorial cession to Germany on the Luxemburg frontier. The great Alsace-Lorraine cession had, from the first, been treated as unalterable.

In the Bordeaux Assembly, on the 18th, the conditions of peace were debated; but none of them was discussed except Alsace-Lorraine—even this topic being cut short by Thiers—and the ratification was voted. Two days later, Jules Favre and Pouyer-Quertier arrived with it at Frankfort; and, at a second interview with Bismarck on the 21st, the ratifications were exchanged between them[1]. Both on this and on the following day, further conversations took place between the plenipotentiaries; and, beyond doubt, the news of the recovery of Paris by the Versailles troops contributed, in no small measure, to the satisfaction of Bismarck and to his promise to hasten, so much as was in his power, the repatriation of the French prisoners in Germany.

The Peace of Frankfort had, with rare fulness, accomplished almost everything that the ruling political genius of the Franco-German War had set forth to achieve by it. France had been brought to her knees; and, though her power of recuperation had, as was speedily to be shown, been underestimated by Bismarck, who, from his point of view, miscalculated her pecuniary ransom, he had, by fulfilling Germany's historic dream, which had of late grown into a national resolve, and recovering for her Alsace and (though with a more remote national claim) 'German-speaking' Lorraine, provided her with an efficient protection against any future attack from the west. Whether the protection thus secured was one for all time remained to be seen. There was no pretence that, in the annexed provinces, more than the minority of a minority desired reincorporation in Germany. Even in Alsace the Protestants, with the Jews, made up less than one-third of the population; habit bound most of the (not numerous) nobility, interest

[1] The Governments of the south-German states, which had taken part in the earlier stages of the war as 'independent belligerents,' had ratified the peace at Berlin on May 15th.

the industrial classes, to France; and the rising generation had, with the aid of the clergy, been brought up in the principles of the centralising French school system. No pacification has ever been concluded which has left more open, on both sides, the sources of deadly mistrust[1].

But, while bringing this peace to pass, Bismarck had also, within the limits imposed upon him by a necessity which he had no desire to defy—that is to say, while leaving Austrian Germany untouched—achieved the German unity of which the new empire, called into life at Versailles, was the symbol and the crown. To this last consummation, which gave to a great national victory its supreme national significance, we have to advert in brief before closing the present volume[2].

The circumstances will be remembered in which the south-western states of Germany had entered into the war. Their Governments were by no means at one, with regard either to the existing conditions of their cooperation with the North-German Confederation, or to the advantages which it might bring to them. King Lewis of Bavaria, for instance, hoped for, and Grand-duke Frederick of Baden repudiated, a territorial aggrandisement as a result of the

[1] The political reorganisation of the new *Reichsland* will be noted in the third volume of this work. Bismarck had steadily opposed annexation to Prussia. Cf. Hohenlohe, *Denkwürdigkeiten*, vol. II, p. 60.

[2] Probably the fullest account of the transactions here summarised is to be found in Ottokar Lorenz's *Kaiser Wilhelm und die Begründung des Reichs* (1902); but it should not be overlooked that this work is, in the main, based upon information derived from Grand-duke Frederick of Baden, whose standpoint was, more or less, peculiar to himself among the south-western Princes. Besides chap. XXXII of vol. II of Klüpfel's admirable digest, therefore, Bavarian sources, Hohenlohe and Bray, should be also consulted, together with the monographs of de Ruville, Küntzel and Marx. For titles see *Bibliography*.

German occupation of Alsace-Lorraine. But events moved with so startling a rapidity that it soon became necessary for those Governments to make up their minds as to their future relations with the North-German Confederation or with the new political body they might form in conjunction with it. About September 12th, the Bavarian Government had in view the substitution, for the North-German, of a new confederation including the south-western states; and, rather later, a similar scheme was discussed at a meeting of the *Volkspartei* in Württemberg. In the meantime, Bismarck and his subordinates showed no disposition to encourage the wish of Baden both to enter the North-German Confederation as it stood and to promote its expansion into a German Empire—for the phrase, although not officially proposed till some three months later, was already on the lips of men. Even, when, on September 22nd, conferences began at Munich between Bray, Mittnacht (for Württemberg) and Delbrück, Baden was temporarily excluded, and the discussion still took a tentative form. But, when the exorbitant conditions demanded by Bavaria became known, Baden was allowed by Bismarck to formulate her proposal for admission into the North-German Confederation; and the Bavarian suggestion of a wider German confederation (in which it was clear that there was a hope of Austria being ultimately included) was rejected by Prussia, though even now Beust and the south-western particularists were loth to give up the game.

But events continued to advance. In September and October, national enthusiasm had risen to a great height in the south-west, stimulated by the southern tour of the National-Liberal leaders Bennigsen and Lasker[1], with whose efforts Bismarck kept in touch through Delbrück. In Württemberg, where hitherto Queen Olga's influence had

[1] Cf., as to their stay at Munich from September 10th to 15th, Oncken, *Bennigsen*, vol. II, p. 181.

delayed her consort's adhesion to the new order of things[1], Mittnacht, who had now succeeded Varnbüler, had accommodated himself to the national military ideas of his colleague Suckow. These two Ministers, together with the Bavarian and Baden premiers Bray and Jolly, were now at Versailles in conference with Bismarck and the men of his confidence, Roon and Delbrück; and, although Bismarck's scheme of a congress of German Princes at headquarters, which might bring matters to a speedy conclusion, had to be deferred, the Grand-duke of Baden arrived there, ready for action, in November. The *crux* still lay in the demands of Bavaria, which, in a word, continued to desiderate a position in the new empire all but equal to that of Prussia[2]; and the question arose whether it would be well to conclude with the lesser states without her. The Crown-prince Frederick, eager for the consummation of the new empire, favoured a proposal made by Oldenburg and Coburg to establish an upper house of Princes in the place of the enlarged *Bundesrat*; but it was not in this direction that, apart from the fact of its being wholly unacceptable to Bismarck, the solution lay. The idea of a *Reichstag* at Versailles was promptly rejected. An *impasse* seemed at hand; for, when the attention of King Lewis was aroused, he could not be expected to brook a negotiation between Prussia and Württemberg (with whom Baden and Hesse-Darmstadt had kept in touch), before the *status* of Bavaria had been settled. Finally, however, Baden and Hesse-Darmstadt signed their treaties at Versailles on November

[1] She was also said to have wished to acquire the Hohenzollern principalities for Württemberg.

[2] Bray demanded eight votes in the *Bundesrat* (instead of the six offered to Bavaria, or the seven which on the old basis would have been her fair proportion), the inclusion of Bavaria in all the three Committees of the *Bundesrat*, and the 'representation of the empire' by the Emperor and Bavaria. These proposals were rejected by Bismarck on October 30th.

15th; the concessions granted to them in excess of the terms of the North-German Confederation being very modest, and the military convention with Baden being left over for the present. And, on November 25th, Mittnacht and Suckow (who had been without final instructions at Versailles) signed, at Berlin, the treaty with Württemberg, to whom the sole additional concession had been made that she should retain control of her own postal system[1].

Meanwhile, the unexpected had happened, and on November 23rd, at Versailles, Bavaria had signed her treaty. The concessions made to her seemed to comprise all that she could have desired, though Bray was not quite satisfied and hoped that things would be better after Bismarck's time. The chief of them consisted of the following[2]. A standing Diplomatic Committee of the *Bundesrat* for Foreign Affairs was to be formed, of which the Governments of Bavaria, Saxony and Württemberg were to be members, and over which Bavaria was to preside. In view of the exclusion of Prussia from this body, it would, in fact, be purely consultative; but, by the simultaneous adoption of the principle that in the *Bundesrat* no constitutional changes should be passed which had failed to secure precisely the number of votes held by these three Governments; the further development of the Constitution was directly subjected to their control[3]. It was provided that Bavarian ambassadors and envoys should, if necessity required, act instead of ambassadors and envoys of the Empire. Bavaria retained control of her posts and telegraphs, of her legislation as to domicile and settlement and in certain other respects, of her rights of taxation of beer and brandy.

[1] The Württemberg treaty had been delayed by orders from Stuttgart to the plenipotentiaries not to proceed without Bavaria unless specially instructed to conclude.

[2] They are very clearly given by Zwiedeneck-Südenhorst, *Deutsche Geschichte* (1806–71), vol. III, pp. 486 ff.

[3] Klüpfel, vol. II, p. 369.

The Bavarian army, though organised in conformity with the Prussian, was to be under independent Bavarian direction in peace-time, and its budget to be settled by the Bavarian diet; in war-time it was to be under imperial control.

Both the Bavarian Government and Bismarck have been subjected to much criticism on the matter of this agreement; and the yielding of the former has been attributed to its fear of the publication by Bismarck of documents seized, with others, at Rouher's country-house at Cerçay and supposed to have thrown a more than doubtful light on previous Bavarian policy[1]. Bismarck's action, on the other hand, has been blamed as showing an insufficient insight into the strength of his own position; and, indeed, just before the conclusion of the treaty, he was reproached on this score by the Crown-prince. It is true that, from an early date onwards, Bismarck had shown himself inclined to treat Bavaria with, perhaps excessive, consideration; but we should not underestimate the strength of particularist feeling which still survived in that kingdom, and was heightened by the hopes of territorial aggrandisement cherished by Lewis II. The last phase of these was the idea of an exchange, by which Baden should acquire Alsace and cede to Bavaria part of the northern territory of the grand-duchy.

As it was, Baden protested against the Bavarian treaty, as containing a clause which, practically, made it unchangeable without Bavarian consent. The Bavarian Chambers, however, in debates which lasted for eleven days, opposed the treaty which Hohenlohe supported; and, though, in the *Bundesrat*, it was at first thought that it would be better to defer an agreement with Bavaria till 1875, when better conditions might be forced upon her by

[1] Cf. Hohenlohe, *Denkwürdigkeiten*, vol. II, p. 33. According to Bismarck's own statement to Hohenlohe (*ib.*, p. 47), had Bavaria at this time refused her adhesion, hostile relations with southern Germany would have ensued for centuries.

a threat of not renewing the *Zollverein* with her, acceptance was ultimately preferred. Many Governments, however, followed the example of Weimar in giving an affirmative vote, qualified by regret at the concessions which had been necessary. Finally, the *Reichstag*, upon whose Liberal members Bismarck had worked through the influence of Ludwig Bamberger[1], adopted the Bavarian treaty by a vote of 195 to 32, and the other treaties with practical unanimity.

It still remained to accomplish the actual and literal crowning of the work of national unification by the offer of the dignity of Emperor to the King of Prussia, and his acceptance of it. Both the Crown-prince and Bismarck had at last come to the conclusion that it behoved the King to accept the imperial crown[2]. Since 1849, there had been much disillusionment on the subject of a German Emperor and empire, accompanied by historical scepticism as to the advantages derived by the nation of yore from the Holy Roman Empire and from the impenetrable halo enveloping a quasi-impersonal Emperor. The Crown-prince, after at one time fancifully inclining to the archaic title of a German King (the other Princes to descend to the rank of dukes), had now risen to the conception *nulli secundus*, and was anxious that his father should accept the imperial title. Bismarck's mind had worked with more directness. At first, Prussian traditions had rendered a change of style repugnant

[1] As to this remarkable writer and politician, who had begun his public life as a radical and rebel in 1848–9, and had now become one of the most valued of intermediaries between the National-Liberals and Bismarck, on whom, shortly before his own death, he published the notable monograph *Bismarck Posthumus* (1899), see Oncken's essay in vol. II, of his *Politische Aufsätze und Reden*.

[2] See G. Freytag, *The Crown Prince and the Imperial Crown* (E. tr.). Freytag himself was, at first, opposed to a revival of the imperial dignity, and, afterwards, to the revival of the old Empire. Cf., also, the amusing account of these transactions in *Gedanken und Erinnerungen*, vol. II, pp. 115 ff.

to him; but he had then fully recognised its importance for the achievement, now near at hand, of the national unity. To the King himself what seemed a merely specious 'addition' to his inherited monarchical dignity was and remained distasteful[1]. What was quite certain was that, like his brother before him[2], he would not accept the imperial crown without the assent of the other German sovereigns—or, indeed, unless it was proffered to him by them.

Bismarck would now have preferred to see him proclaimed Emperor at Versailles by an Assembly of Princes (of whom there were already more at headquarters than at all times suited his humour), the Kings of Bavaria, Saxony and Württemberg being formally invited; but the difficulty was how to induce the most important of the three, King Lewis of Bavaria, to attend. The efforts of the Grand-duke of Baden to make an impression upon him either by letter or through Councillor of State Gelzer (November) had failed; nor was it till Count von Holnstein, the King's Master of the Horse, arrived at Versailles to inspect the proposed royal quarters at the Trianon, that Bismarck saw his way to direct action. On December 1st, Holnstein returned to Hohenschwangau with a letter from Bismarck, who appealed to King Lewis in the most persuasive fashion as his 'faithful vassal[3],' and (in accordance with Holnstein's knowing advice) enclosed a draft reply, as by King Lewis himself, inviting King William's acceptance of the imperial crown. The King of Bavaria read the letter and copied the enclosure without delay; and the deed was done, just in time for the meeting of the *Reichstag* at Berlin on December 4th.

There was still a danger that the National-Liberals would

[1] See Gontaut-Biron, *Mon Ambassade en Allemagne*, 1872–3, p. 12. William I made a great point of maintaining the style of King of Prussia at Berlin.

[2] Cf. *ante*, vol. I, pp. 487–8.

[3] In allusion to the circumstance that, during the Wittelsbach rule over the Mark Brandenburg, the Emperor Lewis the Bavarian had shown goodwill to certain of Bismarck's ancestors.

take umbrage at a proceeding which looked too much like a separate understanding and was, in truth, hardly adequate to the august occasion. On December 3rd, Holnstein reappeared at Versailles, with the royal letter, which King Lewis's uncle, Prince Luitpold, presented to King William. A critical moment followed; but, in the end, good sense prevailed over prejudice, and imagination over habit. On the 9th, the *Reichstag*, and, on the 10th, the *Bundesrat*, took into formal use the terms 'Emperor' and 'Empire'; and, on the 18th, thirty deputies from the popular body, with their veteran president Simson at their head, who in 1849 had offered the German imperial crown to Frederick William IV, appeared at Versailles. On the same day, in the famous *Galerie des Glaces*, in the presence of all the German Princes at headquarters, and of from five to six hundred officers chosen from the besieging army, the new Emperor thanked those around him; and his 'Proclamation to the German People,' announcing the restoration of the German Empire and the imperial dignity, was read to the assembly by Bismarck. The Grand-duke of Baden then called for cheers for the 'Emperor William'—who had been unable quite to overcome his displeasure at being pressed by the Chancellor to agree to the title 'German Emperor' instead of 'Emperor of Germany,' which both he and the Crown-prince preferred[1]. A few days passed before the Emperor forgave Bismarck, who had had his way at the last, and who had, consistently, carried out his design of evolving the imperial out of the federal German state, rather than simply superseding the one by the other.

The elaboration of the constitution of the newly-formed empire belongs to another division of this work, where it will have to be shown in what sense this process was a progressive, and in what sense a conservative, development

[1] Bismarck's main reason was the assumption, implied in the title 'Emperor of Germany,' of territorial sovereignty over the non-Prussian parts of the empire.

of conditions resulting from the mighty change brought about by the military triumphs of 1870–1. The founder of the new German Empire—for, notwithstanding the acknowledged share of his magnanimous sovereign in the accomplishment of the task, this title must be accounted Bismarck's due—shrank from no innovation which he held necessary. But he was conservative at heart; and his conservatism was based on the monarchical principles inborn and inbred in him as an old-Prussian noble. For parliamentary institutions, as such, he had no love to spare; while he recognised the necessity of direct relations between Government and people, he cared less than nothing for the two-Chamber system approved by modern constitutionalists. To the federal origin of the new empire, and to the regard due to the fact of that origin, he had, as observed, been alive from the first. The problem of giving permanency to the edifice of which he had been the master-builder—a very different edifice in conception from that arch of triumph at which he had drawn rein—was not solved by its erection. Of this no European statesman was more fully aware than Bismarck himself, though he might have refused his assent to the *dictum* of the most thoroughgoing of his followers, that 'the unification of Germany has shifted all the foundations of the old society of nations[1].' But Bismarck had at no time ignored the truth that the policy of the day must first take thought of that day's needs; and, great as he was, it was not in him to fall back (except in momentary fits of wrath), so long as he was upheld by the confidence of his sovereign and his country, or to leave unfinished, so far as he had power and time to finish it, the work to which he had set his hand.

[1] See Treitschke's essay on the imperial Military Law (1874), reprinted in *Zehn Jahre deutscher Kämpfe*, p. 446.

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See also C 2 *above.*

INDEX TO VOLUME II

This Index is mainly confined to personal names, with battles congresses and important conferences and treaties.

Abeken, H. (Prussian official), 428, 441
Aegidi, L. K. (German publicist), 40
Alexander II, Tsar of Russia, 15, 215, 400 f., 537
Alexandra, Queen, 138
Algeria, French army in, 454
Alsen, 155 ff., 163 ff., 179 ff.
Alvensleben, Count Albrecht von (Prussian statesman), 28, 87
Alvensleben, General Gustav von, 476 ff.
Ampthill, Lord, *see* Russell, Odo
Andrássy, Count Julius (Hungarian statesman), 339 *n.*, 401, 405, 434, 536
Antonelli, Cardinal, 415
Apponyi, Count Rudolf (Austrian diplomatist), 171
'Arcadians,' the, 415
Arendtsschildt, General von (Hanoverian), 256
Arnim, Count Harry von (Prussian diplomatist), 549
Arnim-Boytzenburg, Count A. H. von (Prussian Minister), 85
Auerswald, Rudolf von (Prussian Minister), 30
Augusta, Queen of Prussia (afterwards German Empress), 26, 225
Aumale, Duc de, 511
Aurelle de Paladines, General de (French), 510 ff.
Austria, Archduke Albrecht of, 220, 251, 297 f., 457 ff.; Archduke Rainer of, 198
Austria, Emperor Francis Joseph of, *see* Francis Joseph; Empress Elizabeth of, *see* Elizabeth

Bach, Freiherr Alexander von (Austrian statesman), 2, 64
Baden, Grand-duke Frederick of, 31 *n.*, 67, 96, 446, 553; Grand-duke Leopold of, 67; Grand-duchess Louisa of, 67
Baden, meeting of Princes at, 48
Balan, H. L. von (German diplomatist), 549
Bamberg Conferences, 12, 224
Bamberger, Ludwig (German politician), 558
Bang (Danish State-councillor), 112
Barral, Count (Italian diplomatist), 216
Barth, Marquard (Bavarian politician), 342
Baude, Baron (French diplomatist), 549
Baudin (French diplomatist), 391 f.
Bavaria, King Lewis II of, 161, 343 ff., 553; King Maximilian II of, 145 ff., 160; Prince Charles of, 291 ff.
Bazaine, Marshal, 461 ff., 472 ff., 483 ff., 497, 511 ff.
Beaumont, battle of, 491 f.
Beaune-la-Rolande, battle of, 516
Bebel, A. (German socialist), 377
Belfort, surrender of, 533
Belgian Neutrality Treaty (1870), 448
Belgians, Leopold I, King of the, 61

Benedek, Ritter L. von (Austrian *Feldzeugmeister*), 220, 251 ff.
Benedetti, Count, 306 ff., 384, 387, 421 ff., 433 ff.
Bennigsen, Rudolf von (Hanoverian statesman), 36 ff., 40 ff., 223, 255, 326, 351, 355, 366, 393, 554
Bernhardi, T. von (Prussian diplomatist and historian), 100 *n.*, 133
Bernstorff, Count A. von (Prussian diplomatist), 10, 84, 170 ff., 397
Bethmann-Hollweg, Moriz August von (Prussian statesman), 9, 30
Bethusy-Huc, Count (Prussian politician), 333
Beust, Count Friedrich Ferdinand von, 22, 133, 171 ff., 338 f., 396, 401, 434, 449, 554
Beyer, General (Prussian), 247, 256, 291 ff.
Biarritz interview, the, 207 f.
Biegeleben, Freiherr L. M. von (Austrian statesman), 70, 94, 192
Bismarck-Bohlen, General Count Frederick von, 537
Bismarck(-Schönhausen), Prince Otto von, 21, 81 ff., and *passim*
Black Sea Clause (Treaty of 1856), 448
Bleichröder (banker), 546
Blind, Karl, 224
Blixen - Finecke, Baron von (Danish politician), 134
Blome, Count (Austrian diplomatist), 199 ff.
Bluhme, C. A. (Danish Minister), 117, 182
Blumenthal, General von (Prussian Chief of Staff), 165, 259, 261 ff., 469
Bluntschli, John Caspar (jurist), 346
Bockum-Dolffs (Prussian politician), 90
Bois-le-Comte, Count (French official), 381
Bonin, General Eduard von (Prussian Minister), 54, 115
Bonnemains, General (French), 468
Bordeaux, National Assembly at, 532, 548
Borny, battle of, 473
Borries, Count W. F. O. von (Hanoverian Minister), 6
Bourbaki, General (French), 461, 518 ff., 520 ff., 526 ff., 541
Boyer, General (French), 542
Brater, K. (Bavarian politician), 43
Bratianu, John (Roumanian statesman), 406 ff.
Bray-Steinburg, Count Otto von (Bavarian Minister), 380, 554ff.
Brenner, Baron (Austrian diplomatist), 311, 321
Broglie, Duc de, 545, 547
Bruck, Freiherr Karl Ludwig von (Austrian Minister), 3, 65, 78
Brunnow, Baron (Russian diplomatist), 170, 397
Brussels, Conference at (1871), 549 f.
Bucher, Lothar (Prussian Privy Councillor), 353, 427
Bundesrat, the North-German, 359 ff.; the, of German Empire, 556
Bunsen, Freiherr Christian Karl Josias von, 10 f.
Buol-Schauenstein, Count Johann Rudolf von (Austrian statesman), 4, 13
Burnside, General (U.S.), 541
Bylandt, van der (Dutch diplomatist), 391

Cadorna, Carlo (Italian diplomatist), 536
Cambriels, General (French), 506
Camphausen, Otto (Prussian statesman), 377
Canrobert, Marshal, 461
Carignan, Prince de, 233
Carlsbad meeting (June 1864), 178

Cavour, Count Camillo di, 15, 33
Chanzy, General (French), 510 ff.
Cialdini, General (Italian), 297 f.
Clam-Gallas, Count Eduard (Austrian General), 273 ff.
Clarendon, Earl of, 8, 10, 15, 170 ff., 413
Clermont-Tonnerre, Count de (French diplomatist), 205
Clinchant, General (French), 532 f.
Communist insurrection, 512
Confederation, the Germanic, 1 ff.
Constitution, the North-German Federal, 353 ff.
Coulmiers, battle of, 514
Cowley, Earl, 227
Crémer, General (French), 507, 524
Crouzat, General (French), 516
Crown-syndicate, the Prussian, 194
Custoza, battle of, 297 f.

Dahlmann, F. C. (historian and politician), 44
Dalwigk-Coeharn, Freiherr C. F. R. von (Hesse-Darmstadt Minister), 319, 345, 368, 372
Dannevirke, the, 154 ff.
Daru, Count (French statesman), 414
Deák, Francis, 65, 198, 221, 307
Degenfeld, Count (Prussian General), 311 ff.
Delbrück, Adalbert (Prussian banker), 45
Delbrück, M. F. Rudolf (Prussian Minister), 186, 354, 554 f.
Denfert-Rochereau, Colonel (French), 533
Denmark, King Frederick VII of, 103, 106, 134 ff.; King Christian I of, 104; King Christian III of, 105; King Frederick III of, 105; King Frederick IV of, 105; King Frederick VI of, 107 ff.; King Christian IX of, 119, 136 ff., 177; Queen Caroline Amalia of, 111; Prince Ferdinand of, 135
Dörnberg, Freiherr von, 91
Douay, General Abel (French), 463 ff.
Douay, General Félix (French), 463 ff., 472
Dresden Conferences, the, 1
Drouyn de Lhuys (French Minister), 14, 88, 234, 303, 315 ff., 336
Ducrot, General (French), 494, 499 ff., 514, 519
Duncker, Franz (publisher), 45, 336
Duncker, Max (Prussian politician), 30 *n.*, 41, 353 ff.
Du Plat, Colonel (Schleswig-Holstein), 138
Düppel, 154 ff., 163 ff.
Duvernois, Clément (French politician), 544

Edelsheim-Gyulai, Freiherr Leopold von (Austrian General), 273 f.
Eider-Danes, the, 122, 131
Elizabeth, Empress of Austria, 203
Elizabeth, Queen of Prussia, 23, 225
Ems audiences, 434 ff.
Encyclica and *Syllabus* (1864), 404
Esterházy, Count Maurice (Austrian Minister), 66, 198
Eugénie, Empress, 401, 443 ff., 461, 498, 540 ff.
Eulenburg, Count Frederick zu (Prussian Minister), 85, 326 ff., 348, 439

Faidherbe, General (French), 523 ff.
Failly, General de (French), 463 ff., 472, 489 ff.
Falckenstein, E. Vogel von (Prussian General), 257, 291 ff.
Farre, General (French), 519
Favre, Jules, 498 f., 538, 540 ff., 550 ff.
Festetics de Tolna, Freiherr Joseph von (Austrian General), 283 f.

Flies, General von (Prussian), 258, 295
Flottwell, E. H. von (Prussian statesman), 28
Forbes, Colonel (U.S.), 541
Forchhammer, Professor P. W., 199
Forckenbeck, Max von (Prussian politician), 45
Francis Joseph, Emperor of Austria, 7, 50, 401 f., 434
Francke, C. P. (Schleswig-Holstein politician), 138
Francstireurs, 500
Frank, General Ritter von (Austrian Minister), 198
Frankfort, the *Fürstentag* at, 91 ff.; occupation of, 294; Peace of (1871), 550 ff.
Fransecky, General von (Prussian), 283 ff.
Fredericia, battle of, 115, 164 f.
Frederick III, Emperor of Germany and King of Prussia, 337; *see* Prussia
Frederick William IV, King of Prussia, 11, 18 ff., 22 ff.
Frère-Orban (Belgian Minister), 411
Freycinet, de (French Minister), 509 ff., 515 ff., 522, 529 ff.
Freydorf, R. von (Baden Minister), 342, 346
Freytag, Gustav, 39
Friesen, Freiherr Richard von (Saxon Minister), 336
Froebel, Julius (publicist), 62, 72 ff.
Frossard, General (French), 461 ff.
Fünen, 179 ff.

Gablenz, Freiherr Anton von, 227 ff.
Gablenz, Freiherr Ludwig von (Austrian Field-marshal), 156, 203, 208, 269 ff.
Gagern, Heinrich von (German statesman), 44
Gagern, Max von (Austrian official), 72
Gambetta, Léon, 497 ff., 508 ff., 522
Garibaldi, Giuseppe, 297, 507, 520, 527 f.
Gastein, Convention of, 200 ff.
Geneva, Peace Congress of, 402
Gerlach, General J. D. von (Danish), 161, 167 f.
Gerlach, Leopold von (Prussian Adjutant-General), 21 ff.
Giskra, Dr (Austrian politician), 308
Gitschin, Austro-Saxon retreat to, 275
Gladstone, W. E., 411
Göben, A. von (Prussian General), 256 ff., 291 ff., 525
Goltz, Count Robert von der (Prussian diplomatist), 9, 211 ff., 303 ff., 393
Goluchowski, Count (Austrian Minister), 65
Gortchakoff, Prince (Russian Chancellor), 396 f.
Govone, General Giuseppe (Italian diplomatist), 214
Gramont, A. A. de, Duc de Guiche and Prince de Bidache (French Minister), 409, 415 ff., 429 ff.
Granville, Earl, 439, 445, 539, 545
Gravelotte, *see* St Privat
Grossdeutsche, the, 73
Grünne, Count Charles Lewis (Austrian Adjutant-General), 2, 65

Hake, General von (Saxon), 159, 183
Halbhuber, Baron (Austrian Commissioner for Schleswig), 195 f.
Hall, C. C. (Danish Minister), 125, 129 ff.
Hammer, Capt. (Danish), 181
Hanover, King Ernest Augustus of, 3; King George V of, 3 ff., 222 f., 349, 352 f.; Queen Mary of, 350; Princess Frederika of, 401

Hassenpflug, Hans Daniel L. F. (Hesse-Cassel Minister), 3
Hatzfeldt, Count (Prussian diplomatist), 15, 20
Häusser, Ludwig (historian), 196
Havana, naval encounter off, 460
Heffter, A. von (Prussian politician), 200 *n.*
Hegermann-Lindencrone, General (Danish), 158
Henckel von Donnersmarck, Count, 546
Henikstein, Freiherr von (Austrian General), 252
Hepke (Prussian Privy Councillor), 353
Herring, Baron (of Brünn), 309
Herwarth von Bittenfeld, Eberhart von (Prussian Field-marshal), 262
Hesse-Cassel, Frederick Wm, Elector of, 2 f., 77, 237, 320, 348
Hesse-Darmstadt, Grand-duke Lewis III of, 316; Prince Alexander of, 291 ff.
Hettstadt, fight at, 295
Heydt, August von der (Prussian Minister), 30, 76, 80, 326 ff., 378
Hinckeldey, K. L. F. von (Prussian director of police), 21 *n.*
Hodges, Col. Sir G. (British diplomatist), 115 *n.*
Hohenlohe-Ingelfingen, Prince Adolf von (Prussian Minister), 76
Hohenlohe-Schillingsfürst, Prince Chlodwig zu, 190 f., 342, 367, 371, 380, 404, 557
Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen, Prince Charles Anthony of, 29, 380, 405 ff., 420 ff.; Prince Charles of, *see* Roumania; Prince Leopold of, 406, 420 ff.; Prince Frederick of, 420; Princess Antonia of, 406; Princess Stephanie of, 406
Holland, King William III of, 387 ff.; Queen Sophia of, 389; Prince Henry of, 389; Prince William of (Prince of Orange), 389, 392
Holnstein, Count von (Bavarian official), 559 f.
Hoverbeck, Freiherr Leopold von (Prussian politician), 45, 347

Indemnity, the Constitutional, in Prussia, 325 ff.
Italy, King Victor Emmanuel of, *see* Victor Emmanuel; Prince Amadeo of, Duke of Aosta, 421; Prince of Carignan, *see* Carignan
Itzehoe, Holstein Estates at, 127
Itzenplitz, Count Heinrich von (Prussian Minister), 328

Jachmann, Eduard (Prusso-German Vice-Admiral), 170
Jacoby, Johann (Prussian politician), 329, 538
Jahde Bay, the, 222
John, Freiherr F. von (Austrian General and Minister), 252
Jolly, Julius (Baden Minister), 68, 374, 555
Jörg (Bavarian politician), 446
Jutland, invasion of, 162 ff.

Karolyi, Count (Austrian diplomatist), 192, 311 ff.
Keller (Alsatian deputy), 545
Kern, Dr (Swiss statesman), 20
Keyserling, Count von (Prussian diplomatic agent), 410
Kiel, Peace of, 107 *n.*
Kielmannsegg, Count Eduard von (Hanoverian Minister), 6
Kimberley, Earl of (Lord Wodehouse), 144
Kirchbach, Count H. von (Prussian General), 467 f.
Kleist-Retzow, Hans von (Prussian politician), 328, 330.
Krismanič, General (Austrian Chief of Staff), 251, 265
Königgrätz, battle of, 277 ff.

Kübeck, Freiherr A. C. von (Austrian diplomatist), 238 f.
Kuhn von Kuhnenfeld, Freiherr Franz von (Austrian General), 298

Ladmirault, General (French), 461 ff.
La Ferronays, Count (French diplomatist), 386
La Guéronnière (French diplomatist), 411
La Marmora, Marquis A. F. de (Italian General and Minister), 209, 221
Lasker, Eduard (Prussian politician), 330, 356, 374 f., 379, 554
Lassalle, Ferdinand, 100 *n.*
La Tour d'Auvergne, Prince (French diplomatist), 170 ff.
La Valette, Marquis (French Minister), 301, 317
'League of Neutrals,' the, 537
Le Bœuf, Edmond (French General and Minister), 416, 431, 439, 443, 457, 459
Lebrun (French General), 416, 457
Le Clerc (French diplomatist), 550
Lefort, General (French), 505
Lehmann, Orla (Danish politician), 113
Leonhardt, G. A. W. (Hanoverian and Prussian Minister), 374
Leopold I, King of the Belgians, *see* Belgians
Le Sourd (French diplomatist), 429, 447
Lewal, Col. (French), 458
Liebknecht (socialist), 377 *n.*
Lippe-Biesterfeld-Wiessenfeld, Count Leopold zu (Prussian Minister), 90, 328, 348, 374
Loftus, Lord Augustus (diplomatist), 413, 421
London, Conference of, (1864) 170 ff.; (1867) 397 ff.; Protocol of (8 May 1852), 122
Lütcken, von (Hanoverian Minister), 6
Lyons, Lord (British diplomatist), 419, 433, 450

MacMahon, Marshal, Duc de Magenta, 459, 461 ff., 484 ff.
Malaguzzi, Count (Italian diplomatist), 209
Malmö, Truce of, 115
Manderström, Count (Swedish Minister), 161
Manteuffel, Field-marshal Freiherr Edwin von (Prussian statesman), 60, 203, 256 ff., 316, 519
Manteuffel, Otto Theodor von (Prussian Minister), 2, 15, 21 ff., 28 ff.
Mars-la-Tour, battle of, 475 ff.
Mathy, Karl (Baden statesman), 39, 44, 369, 373
Maximilian, Emperor of Mexico, 401
Mecklenburg-Schwerin, Frederick Francis II, Grand-duke of, 94, 295, 515 ff., 520 f.
Meding, Oscar ('Gregor Samarow'), 353
Mensdorff-Pouilly, Count Alexander (Austrian Minister), 188, 198, 215
Mercier, Baron de (French diplomatist), 424
Metternich, Prince Richard (Austrian diplomatist), 409, 448
Metz, August (Hesse-Darmstadt politician), 41
Metz, capitulation of, 511 ff.
Meza, General de (Danish), 157, 161
Michaelis, O. (economist), 335
Michel, General (French), 468
Miquel, John (Hanoverian and German politician), 37, 356
Missunde, 157
Mittnacht, Freiherr Hermann von (Württemberg Minister), 375, 554 ff.
Mohl, Moritz (Württemberg politician), 372, 376
Mohl, Robert von (Baden jurist and diplomatist), 69, 139

Mollinary, Austrian General, 284
Moltke, Field-marshal Count Helmuth von, 60, 150 ff., 242 ff., 452 ff.
Moltke-Nützschau, Count Charles von (Danish Minister), 112
Monrad, Bishop D. G. (Danish Minister), 144 ff., 182
Montemart, Duc de (French diplomatist), 386
Montpensier, Duc Antoine de, 420, 433
Morier, Sir Robert (diplomatist), 130 *n.*
Motterouge, General de la (French), 507
Moustier, Marquis de (French Minister), 317, 383, 394, 403
Mühler, Heinrich von (Prussian Minister), 77, 328

Nachod, battle of, 270
Napoleon III, Emperor of the French, 32 f., 47 f., 135 ff., 225 ff., 299 ff., 382 ff., 403 ff., 449 ff., 455 ff., and *passim*
Napoleon-Joseph-Charles-Paul, Prince, 449
Nassau, Duke Adolphus of, 348
Nationalverein, the, 36 ff., 42 ff., 145
Neufchâtel, 16 ff.
Neutrality declarations (1870), 447 ff.
'New Era,' the, in Prussia, 28, 51
Nicholas I, Tsar of Russia, 9 ff.
Niel, Marshal, 396, 398, 404, 410, 416, 455 f.
Nigra, Cav. Constantino (Italian diplomatist), 214, 434, 436, 448
Nikolsburg, Preliminaries of, 289, 309 ff.
North-German Confederation, constitution of, 324 f.

Oecumenical Council, the (1869–70), 414
Oersted, A. S. (Danish Minister), 124
Oetker, F. (Hesse-Cassel politician), 45
Oldenburg, Grand-duke Peter of, 119, 139 f., 200 f., 332 *n.*
Ollivier, Émile (French statesman), 413, 415, 419, 439, 443, 471
Olmütz, Punctation of, 1
Olózaga, Sebastiano (Spanish diplomatist), 424, 437
'Open Letter,' Christian VIIIth's, 110 ff.
Orges, Hermann (publicist), 61, 71

Palacký, Francis (historian and politician), 65
Palikao, General Cousin de Montauban, Count of, 471, 484 ff.
Palmerston, Viscount, 8
Paris, Peace Congress at (1856), 15 ff.; Conference at, (1857) 20; (1869) 410; Exhibition (1867), 400 f.; siege of, 499 ff.; German entry into, 548
Patow, Reichsfreiherr Robert von (Prussian Minister), 30, 58, 76
Pauli, Reinhold (historian), 345
Perponcher, Count (Prussian diplomatist), 392
Persano, Count Pellion di (Italian Admiral), 298
Peucker, General Eduard von (Prussian), 60
Pfordten, Freiherr L. K. H. von der (Bavarian Minister), 31, 160 f., 217 f., 237, 312, 319 ff., 340 ff.
Planck, Gottlieb (Hanoverian jurist), 37
Platen-Hallermund, Count F. E. von (Hanoverian Minister), 6
Plener, Ignaz von (Austrian Minister), 66
Polignac, Prince de (French statesman), 386
Portugal, Ferdinand, King-Consort of, 420; King Louis of, 421
Pourtalès, Count Albert (Prussian diplomatist), 9
Pouyer-Quertier (French statesman), 550 ff.

Prague, Peace of, 321 ff.
Prim, Count Juan de Reus, Marquis de los Castillejos, Marshal, 362 ff.
Prussia, King Frederick William IV of, *see* Frederick William IV; King William I of (afterwards Emperor), *see* William I; Queen Elizabeth of, *see* Elizabeth; Crown-prince Frederick William of (afterwards Emperor Frederick III), 16, 259 ff., 337, 467 ff., 558 ff.; Prince Albrecht of, 229; Prince Charles of, 225; Prince Frederick Charles of, 156 ff., 197, 246, 259 ff., 464, 508, 512; Crown-princess Victoria of (afterwards Empress), 16

Quaade, G. J. (Danish Minister), 170 ff., 183 f.

Radziwill, Prince Anthony (Prussian aide-de-camp), 440
Ramming, Freiherr W. von (Austrian *Feldzeugmeister*), 252, 270 f.
Ranc, French politician, 509
Rancès, Manuel, y Villanueva (Spanish diplomatist), 421
Ranke, Leopold von (historian), 10
Rechberg-Rothenlöwen, Count J. B. von (Austrian statesman), 34, 64, 65, 78 f., 98, 132, 141, 146, 183 ff.
Reformverein, the, 145
Régnier (secret agent), 540 ff.
Reichstag, the North-German, 361 ff.
Rendsburg, 182 f.
Reuss, Prince Henry VII (Prussian diplomatist), 302
Reyau, General (French), 507
Reysscher, A. L. (Württemberg politician), 43
Ricasoli, Baron Bettino (Italian statesman), 302
Rochau, A. L. von (German publicist), 45
Roggenbach, Freiherr Franz von (Baden Minister), 62, 68 f., 319
Roon, Field-marshal Count Albrecht von, 52 ff., 150, 441
Rossbrünn, combat at, 295
Rothan, G. (French diplomatist), 321
Rothschild, Baron Alphonse de, 547
Rouher, E. (French Minister), 206, 410, 555
Roumania, King Charles of (Prince of Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen), 231, 406 ff.; Prince Couza of, 214
Russell, Earl (Lord John Russell), 14, 129 ff., 149, 170 ff.
Russell, Odo (afterwards Lord Odo Russell and Lord Ampthill) (British diplomatist), 542

Saarbrücken, occupation of, 463
St Privat, battle of, 481 ff.
Salazar, Don E. de, y Mazaredo (Spanish politician), 420, 423 ff., 432
Salzburg interview, the, 401
Samwer, C. (Schleswig-Holstein politician), 138
Savigny, C. F. von (Prussian Minister), 219, 239
Saxe-Coburg-Gotha, Duke Ernest II of, 38, 42 f., 71 ff., 92, 138, 145
Saxony, King John of, 94 ff., 336 ff.; Crown-prince, afterwards King, Albert of, 273 ff., 337, 488 ff.
Scheel-Plessen, Freiherr K. von (Holstein politician), 125
Schele, Freiherr Eduard von (Hanoverian Minister), 5
Schele, L. N. von (Danish Minister), 124
Schleinitz, Count Alexander von (Prussian Minister), 30, 63
Schleswig - Holstein - Gottorp, Duke Adolphus of, 105; Prince Frederick Augustus of, 107
Schleswig-Holstein-Noer, Prince Frederick of, 111, 114

Schleswig-Holstein-Sonderburg-Augustenburg, Duke Christian August of, 106, 111, 114, 120 ff., 136 f., 201; Duke Frederick VIII of, 136, 195 f., 210, 349; Prince Christian of, 137
Schleswig-Holstein-Sonderburg-Glücksburg, Prince Christian, *see* Denmark, King Christian IX of
Schmerling, Anton von (Austrian statesman), 64 ff., 198
Schrenck-Notzing, Freiherr K. von (Bavarian Minister), 31, 186
Schulze-Delitzsch, H. (Prussian politician), 39, 59, 330, 377
Schwarzenberg, Prince Felix zu, 64
Schwerin-Putzar, Count M. von (Prussian statesman), 30
Sedan, capitulation of, 493 ff.
Selchow, von (Prussian Minister), 328
Serrano, y Dominguez, Duke Francisco de la Torre, Marshal, 420
Simson, Eduard von (Prussian and German politician), 355
Solferino, battle of, 34
Solms-Laubach, Count, 365
Spain, Queen Isabella of, 420
Spicheren, battle of, 469 ff.
Stanley, Lord, 393, 410
Stavenhagen, General F. (Prussian politician), 58
Steinmetz, General C. F. von (Prussian), 464
Stephan, Heinrich von (Postmaster-general), 355
Stoffel, Colonel Baron de (French military *attaché*), 416, 455
Stosch, Albrecht von (Prussian General and Admiral), 259
Stranz, Colonel C. von (Prussian diplomatic agent), 435
Strassburg, fall of, 506
Strat (Roumanian diplomatist), 435, 437
Suckow, Major Albert von (Württemberg Minister), 345, 380, 556
Széchenyi, Count (Hungarian statesman), 65

Tann-Rathsamhausen, Freiherr L. von der (Bavarian General), 255, 510
Tauberbischofsheim, combat at, 295
Tauffkirchen, Count (Bavarian statesman), 368, 398
Tegetthoff, W. von (Austrian Vice-Admiral), 170, 298
Thiers, Adolphe, 382, 437, 444, 539 f., 542 ff.
Thile, C. Hermann von (Prussian statesman), 421, 447
Thun, Count Leo (Austrian Minister), 2, 64
Thun, Count von (Austrian General), 283 f.
Thüngen, Freiherr von (Bavarian politician), 342, 371
Thurn and Taxis, Prince Maximilian of, 92
Tornaco, Baron (Luxemburg Minister), 389, 393
Tours, French Government at, 505 ff.
Trautenau, battle of, 270
Treitschke, Heinrich von, 196 and *n.*, 204, 225
Trentino, the, 298
Trochu, General (French), 483, 498, 515 f., 541
Twesten, C. von (Prussian politician), 60, 326, 330

Ujest, Duke of (Prussian politician), 355, 366
Unruh, Hans Victor von (Prussian politician), 41
Usedom, Count C. G. L. G. von (Prussian diplomatist), 13, 213

Varnbüler von und zu Hemmingen, Freiherr F. C. G. von (Württemberg Minister), 187, 345, 368, 372 f., 400
Venetia, session of, 299 ff.
Versailles, Preliminaries of (1871), 547 ff.

Versen, Maximilian von (Prussian Major, afterwards General), 427
Vicari, H. von, Abp of Freiburg, 67
Victor Emmanuel I, King of Italy, 297, 300, 449 f., 536
Victoria, Queen, 31, 98, 120, 397, 411
Vienna Conferences and Peace, (1855) 13 f.; (1864) 184 ff.
Villafranca, Peace of, 35
Villèle, Count de (French statesman), 386
Villersexel, action at, 528, 531
Vimercati, Count (Italian military *attaché*), 436, 448
Vincke, Georg von (Prussian politician), 75
Vinoy, General, 532
Vionville, *see* Mars-la-Tour
Virchow, R. (Prussian politician and man of science), 90, 145 *n.*, 330
Vitzthum von Eckstädt, Count Charles Frederick (Saxon and Austrian diplomatist), 410, 413, 448
Voigts-Rhetz, Constantine von (Prussian General), 259, 350

Wagner, Richard, 343 ff.
Wagner-Frommenhausen, Freiherr R. von (Württemberg Minister), 374, 380
Waldeck, Benedict (Prussian politician), 59 f., 330, 333
Ward, John (British diplomatist), 130 *n.*
Wedell, L. H. von (Prussian General), 13
Weissenburg, battle of, 465
Werder, General von (Prussian), 506 ff., 520, 526 ff.
Werther, Freiherr C. von (Prussian diplomatist), 184, 321, 327, 429 f.
Werthern, Freiherr (afterwards Count) G. von (Prussian diplomatist), 420
Westphalen, F. O. W. Henning von (Prussian Minister), 23, 28
William I, King of Prussia (afterwards German Emperor), 25 ff., 93, 212, 241 f., 400, 432 ff., 518 ff.
Willisen, General Freiherr A. von, 33, 77
Willisen, General Wilhelm von, 116
Wimpffen, General von (French), 496
Windthorst, Ludwig (Hanoverian Minister), 222
Wittich, General Theodor (Prussian), 507
Wochenblatt party, the, 9
Wörth, battle of, 467 ff.
Wrangel, Count Friedrich von (Prussian Field-marshal), 148 ff., 179 ff.
Württemberg, King Charles of, 316
Würzburg Conferences, (1859) 46; (1861–2) 74
Wydenbrugk, W. E. O. von (Schleswig-Holstein agent), 174

Ysenburg, Prince (Prussian diplomatist), 255

Zedlitz, Freiherr von (Prussian Commissioner for Schleswig), 195
Zimmermann, Gustav (Hanoverian Minister), 222
Zollparlament, the, 368 ff., 375 ff.
Zollverein, the, 3 ff.; treaties, 370 ff.
Zuylen, Count van der (Dutch Minister), 389, 395

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